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A

SIMPLE STORY.

IN

FOUR VOLUMES.

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

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CHAPTER I.

THROUGHOUT life, there cannot happen an event to arreſt the reflection of a thoughtful mind more powerfully, or to leave ſo laſting an impreſſion, as that of returning to a place after a few years abſence, and obſerving an entire alteration in reſpect to all the perſons who once formed the neighbourhood—To find ſome, who but a few years before were left in the bloom of youth and

health, dead — to find children left at ſchool, married, with children of their own — ſome perſons who were in riches, reduced to poverty—others who were in poverty, become rich — thoſe, once renowned for virtue, now deteſted for their vice — roving huſbands, grown conſtant — conſtant ones, become rovers — the firmeſt friends, changed to the moſt implacable enemies—beauty faded. — In a word, every change to demonſtrate

"All is tranſitory on this ſide the grave."

Actuated by a wiſh, that the reflective reader may experience the ſenſation, which an attention to circumſtances ſuch as theſe, muſt cauſe; he is deſired to imagine ſeventeen years elapſed, ſince he has ſeen or heard of any of thoſe perſons, who in the foregoing volumes have been introduced to his acquaintance — and

now,

now, fuppoſing himſelf at the period of thoſe ſeventeen years, follow the ſequel of their hiſtory.

To begin with the firſt female object of this ſtory.—The beautiful, the beloved Miſs Milner—ſhe is no longer beautiful —no longer beloved—no longer—tremble while you read it!—no longer—virtuous.

Dorriforth, the pious, the good, the tender Dorriforth, is become a hard-hearted tyrant. The compaſſionate, the feeling, the juſt Lord Elmwood, an example of implacable rigour and injuſtice.

Miſs Woodley is grown old, but leſs with years than grief.

The child Rushbrook is become a man, and the apparent heir of Lord Elmwood's fortune; while his own daughter, his only child by his once adored Miss Milner, he refuses ever to see again, in vengeance to her mother's crimes.

The least wonderful change, is the death of Mrs. Horton. Except

Sandford, who remains much the same as heretofore.

We left Lady Elmwood in the last volume at the summit of human happiness; a loving and beloved bride.—We begin this volume, and find her upon her death bed.

At

At thirty-five, her "Courſe was run" —a courſe full of perils, of hopes, of fears, of joys, and at the end of ſorrows; all exquiſite of their kind, for exquiſite were the feelings of her ſuſceptible heart.

At the commencement of this ſtory, her father is deſcribed in the laſt moments of his life, with all his cares fixed upon her, his only child—how vain theſe cares! how vain every precaution that was taken for her welfare! She knows, ſhe reflects upon this; and yet, torn by that inſtinctive power which a parent feels, Lady Elmwood on her dying day has no worldly thought, but that of the future happineſs of *her* only child.—To every other proſpect before her, "Thy "will be done" is her continual exclamation; but where the miſery of her daughter preſents itſelf, the dying peni-

tent would there, combat the will of heaven.

To ſtate the progreſſion by which vice gains a predominance in the heart, may be a uſeful leſſon; but it is one ſo little to the ſatisfaction of moſt readers, that it is not meant to be related here, all the degrees of frailty by which Lady Elmwood fell; but inſtead of picturing every occaſion of her fall, come briefly to the events that followed.

There are, nevertheleſs, ſome articles under the former claſs, which ought not to be entirely omitted.

Lord Elmwood, after four years paſſed in the moſt perfect enjoyment of happineſs, the marriage ſtate could give; after ſeeing himſelf the father of a beautiful daughter, whom he loved with a tender-

neſs

ness nearly equal to his love for her mother, Lord Elmwood was then under the indispensable necessity of leaving them both for a time, in order to save from the depredation of his steward, a very large estate in the West Indies. His voyage was tedious; his residence there, from various accidents, prolonged from time to time, till near three years had at length passed away.—Lady Elmwood, at first only unhappy, became at last provoked; and giving way to that impatient, irritable disposition she had so seldom governed, resolved, in spite of his injunctions, to divert the melancholy hours his absence caused, by mixing in the gaiest circles of London. His Lordship at this time, and for many months before, had been detained abroad by a severe and dangerous illness, which a too cautious fear of her uneasiness had prompted

him to conceal; and ſhe received his frequent apologies for not returning, with a ſuſpicion and reſentment they were calculated, but not intended, to inſpire.

To violent anger, ſucceeded a degree of indifference ſtill more fatal — Lady Elmwood's heart was never formed for ſuch a ſtate—there, where all the paſſions tumultuous ſtrove by turns, one among them ſoon found the means to occupy all vacancies — that one was love. — The dear object of her fondeſt, trueſt, affections was away; and thoſe affections painted the time ſo irkſome that was paſt; ſo wearifome that, which was ſtill to come; ſhe flew from the preſent tedious ſolitude, to the dangerous ſociety of one, whoſe every care to charm her, could not repay her for a moment's loſs of him, whoſe abſence he ſupplied.

Or

Or if the delirium gave her a moment's recompenſe, what were her ſufferings and remorſe, when ſhe was awakened from the fleeting joy by the unexpected arrival of her huſband? — How happy, how tranſporting, had been that arrival a few months before! — As it had then been felicitous, it was now bitter — this word, however, weakly expreſſes — Language affords none, to deſcribe Lady Elmwood's ſenſations on being told her Lord was arrived, and that neceſſity only had ſo long delayed his return.

Guilty, but not hardened in her guilt, her pangs, her ſhame were the more exceſſive. She fled the place at his approach; fled his houſe, never again to return to a habitation where he was the maſter. — She did not, however, eſcape with her paramour, but eloped to ſhelter herſelf

in the most dreary retreat; where she partook of no one comfort from society, or from life, but the still unremitting friendship of Miss Woodley.—Even her infant daughter she left behind, nor would allow herself the consolation of her innocent, but reproachful, smiles—she left her in her father's house that she might be under his protection; parted with her, as she thought for ever, with all the agonies that mothers part from their infant children: and yet even a mother scarcely can conceive how much more sharp those agonies were, on beholding the child sent after her, as the perpetual outcast of its father.

Lord Elmwood's love to his lady had been extravagant—the effect of his hate was extravagant likewise. Beholding himself separated from her by a barrier never

never to be removed, he vowed in the deep torments of his revenge, not to be reminded of her by one individual object; much less by one so nearly allied to her as her child. To bestow upon that his affections, would be, he imagined, still in some sort, to divide them with the mother.—Firm in his resolution, the beautiful Matilda was, at the age of six years, sent out of her father's house, and received by her mother with the tenderness, but with the anguish of those parents, who behold their offspring visited with the punishment due only to their own offences.

During this transaction, which was performed by his Lordship's agents at his command, he himself was engaged in an affair of still weightier importance —that of life or death:—he determined upon

upon his own death, or the death of the man who had wounded his honour and his happineſs. A duel with his old antagoniſt was the reſult of this determination; nor was the Duke of Avon (before the deceaſe of his father and eldeſt brother, Lord Frederick Lawnly) backward to render all the ſatisfaction that was required.—For it was no other than he, whoſe love for Lady Elmwood had ſtill ſubſiſted, and whoſe art and induſtry left no means uneſſayed to perfect his deſigns;—No other than he, (who, next to Lord Elmwood, was ever of all her lovers moſt prevalent in her heart,) to whom Lady Elmwood yielded her own and her huſband's future peace, and gave to his vanity a prouder triumph, than if ſhe had never given her hand in preference to another. This triumph however was but ſhort—a month only after

after the return of Lord Elmwood, his Grace was called upon to anſwer for his conduct, and was left upon the ſpot where they met, ſo maimed, and defaced with ſcars, as never again to endanger the honour of a huſband. As Lord Elmwood was inexorable to all accommodation; their engagement laſted for ſome ſpace of time; nor any thing but the ſteadfaſt aſſurance his opponent was ſlain, could at laſt have torn his Lordſhip from the field, though he himſelf was mortally wounded.

Yet even during that period of his danger, while for days he laid in the continual expectation of his own death, not all the entreaties of his deareſt, moſt intimate, and moſt reſpected friends could prevail upon him to pronounce forgiveneſs to his wife, or ſuffer them to

bring

being his daughter to him for his laſt bleſſing.

Lady Elmwood, who was made acquainted with the minuteſt circumſtance as it paſſed, appeared to wait the news of her lord's deceaſe with patience; but upon her brow, and in every lineament of her face it was marked, his death was an event ſhe would not for a day ſurvive —and ſhe had left her child an orphan, to have followed Lord Elmwood to the grave.—She was prevented the trial; he recovered; and from the ample and diſtinguiſhed vengeance he had obtained upon the irreſiſtible perſon of the Duke, in a ſhort time ſeemed to regain his uſual tranquillity.

He recovered, while Lady Elmwood fell ſick and lingered—poſſeſſed of youth and a good conſtitution, ſhe lingered till

ten

ten years decline, brought her to that period, with which the reader is now going to be presented.

CHAPTER II.

IN a lonely country on the borders of Scotland, a ſingle houſe by the ſide of a dreary heath, was the reſidence of the once gay, volatile Miſs Milner—In a large gloomy apartment of this ſolitary habitation (the windows of which ſcarce rendered the light acceſſible) was laid upon her death-bed, the once lovely Lady Elmwood—pale, half ſuffocated with the loſs of breath; yet her ſenſes perfectly clear and collected, which ſerved but to ſharpen the anguiſh of dying.

In one corner of the room, by the ſide of an old-faſhioned ſtool, kneels Miſs Woodley, praying moſt devoutly

for

for her full beloved friend, but in vain endeavouring to pray compoledly — floods of tears pour down her furrowed cheeks, and frequent fobs of ſorrow break through each pious ejaculation.

Cloſe by her mother's ſide, one hand ſupporting her head, the other wiping from her face the damp dew of death, behold Lady Elmwood's daughter — Lord Elmwood's daughter too — yet he far away, negligent of what either ſuffers. — Lady Elmwood turns to her often and attempts an embrace, but her feeble arms forbid, and they fall motionleſs. — The daughter perceiving thoſe ineffectual efforts, has her whole face convulſed with ſorrow; kiſſes her mother; holds her to her boſom; and hangs upon her neck, as if ſhe wiſhed to cling there, and the grave not to part them.

On the other side the bed sirs Sandford his hair grown white—his face wrinkled with age—his heart the same as ever——The reprover, the enemy of the vain, idle, and wicked; but the friend, the comforter of the forlorn and miserable.

Upon those features where sarcasm, reproach, and anger dwelt to threaten and alarm the sinner; mildness, tenderness, and pity beamed, to support and console the penitent. Compassion changed his language, and softened all those harsh tones that used to denounce resentment. "In the name of God," said he to Lady Elmwood, "that God who suffered for you, and, suffering, knew and pitied all our weaknesses—By him, who has given his word to *take compassion on the sinner's tears*, I bid you hope for mercy.

mercy.—By that innocence in which you once lived, be comforted—By the sorrows you have known since your degradation, hope, in some degree, to have atoned—By that sincerity which shone upon your youthful face when I joined your hands; those thousand virtues you have at times given proof of, you were not born to die *the death of the wicked.*"

As he spoke these words of consolation, her trembling hand clasped his—her dying eyes darted a ray of brightness—but her failing voice endeavoured, in vain, to articulate.—At length, her eyes fixing upon her daughter as their last dear object, she was just understood to utter the word "Father."

"I understand you," replied Sandford, "and by all that influence I ever

had over him, by my prayers, my tears," (and they flowed at the word) "I will implore him to own his child."

She could now only smile, in thanks.

"And if I should fail," continued he, "yet while I live, she shall not want a friend or protector—all an old man like me can answer for"—here his tears interrupted him.

Lady Elmwood was sufficiently sensible of his words and their import, to make a sign as if she wished to embrace him; but finding her life leaving her fast, she reserved this last token of love for her daughter—With a struggle she lifted herself from her pillow, clung to her child—and died in her arms.

CHAP-

CHAPTER III.

LORD Elmwood was by nature, and more from education, of a serious, thinking, and philosophic turn of mind. His religious studies had completely taught him to consider this world but as a passage to another; to enjoy with gratitude what Heaven in its bounty should bestow, and to bear with submission, all which in its vengeance it might inflict. In a greater degree than most people he practised this doctrine; and as soon as the first shock he received from Lady Elmwood's conduct was abated, an entire calmness and resignation ensued, but still of that sensible and feeling kind, which could never force him to forget the

happineſs he had loſt; and it was this ſenſibility, which urged him to fly from its more keen recollection as much as poſſible—this he alledged as the reaſon he would never ſuffer Lady Elmwood, or even her child, to be named in his hearing. But this injunction (which all his friends, and even the ſervants in the houſe who attended his perſon, had received) was, by many people, ſuſpected rather to proceed from his reſentment, than his tenderneſs; nor did he himſelf deny, that reſentment mingled with his prudence; for prudence he called it not to remind himſelf of happineſs he could never taſte again, and of ingratitude that might impel him to hatred; and prudence he called it, not to form another attachment near to his heart; more eſpecially ſo near as a parent's, which might a ſecond time expoſe him

to

to all the torments of ingratitude, from one whom he affectionately loved.

Upon theſe principles he formed the unſhaken reſolution, never to acknowledge Lady Matilda as his child—or acknowledging her as ſuch—never to ſee, hear of, or take one concern whatever in her fate and fortune. The death of her mother appeared a favourable time, had he been ſo inclined, to have recalled this declaration which he had ſolemnly and repeatedly made—ſhe was now deſtitute of the protection of her other parent, and it became his duty, at leaſt to provide her a guardian, if he did not chooſe to take that tender title upon himſelf.—But to mention either the mother or child to Lord Elmwood was an equal offence, and prohibited in the ſtrongeſt terms to all his friends and houſehold: and as he

was an excellent good master, a sincere friend, and a most generous patron; not one of his acquaintance or dependants were hardly enough to draw upon themselves his certain displeasure, which was violent in the extreme, by even the official intelligence of Lady Elmwood's death.

Sandford himself, intimidated through age, or by the austere, and even morose, manners Lord Elmwood had of late years adopted, Sandford wished, if possible, some other would undertake the dangerous task of recalling to his Lordship's memory, there ever was such a person as his wife. He advised Miss Woodley to indite a proper letter to him on the subject, but she reminded him, such a step was still more perilous in her, than any other person, as she was the most destitute being

being on earth, without the benevolence of Lord Elmwood. The death of her aunt, Mrs. Horton, had left her ſole reliance on Lady Elmwood, and now her death, had left her totally dependant upon the earl—for her Ladyſhip, long before her deceaſe, had declared it was not her intention, to leave a ſingle ſentence behind her in the form of a will—She had no will, ſhe ſaid, but what ſhe would wholly ſubmit to Lord Elmwood's; and, if it were even his will, her child ſhould live in poverty, as well as baniſhment, it ſhould be ſo.—But, perhaps, in this implicit ſubmiſſion to his Lordſhip, there was a diſtant hope that the neceſſitous ſituation of his daughter might plead more forcibly than his parental love; and that knowing her abandoned of every ſupport but through him ſelf, that idea might ſome ſmall little [illegible] being.

tin between them; and but at least a token of the relationship.

But as Lady Elmwood anxiously wished this principle upon which she acted, should be concealed from his Lordship's suspicion, she included her friend, Miss Woodley, in the same fate; and thus, the only persons dear to her, she left, but at Lord Elmwood's pleasure, to be preserved from perishing in want.—Her child was too young to advise her on this subject, her friend too disinterested; and at this moment they were both without the smallest means of support, except through the justice or compassion of his Lordship.—Sandford had, indeed, promised his protection to the daughter; but his liberality had no other source than from his patron, with whom he still lived as usual, except during the

last winter,

winter when his Lordship resided in town, he then mostly made a visit to Lady Elmwood—On this last visit, he staid to see her buried.

After some mature deliberations, Sandford was now preparing to go to Lord Elmwood at his house in town, and there to deliver himself the news that must sooner or later be told; and he meant also to venture, at the same time, to keep the promise he had made to his dying Lady—but the news reached Lord Elmwood before Sandford arrived; it was announced in the public papers, and by that means came first to his knowledge.

He was breakfasting by himself, when the newspaper that first gave the intelligence of Lady Elmwood's death, was laid

laid before him the paragraph contained these words:

"On Wednesday last died, at Dring-
"Park, a village in Northumberland, the
"right honourable Countess Elmwood.—
"This lady, who has not been heard of
"for many years in the fashionable world,
"was a rich heiress, and of extreme beau-
"ty; but although she received overtures
"from many men of the first rank, she
"preferred her guardian, the present
"Lord Elmwood (then the humble Mr.
"Dorriforth) to them all—and it is said,
"they enjoyed an uncommon share of fe-
"licity, till his Lordship going abroad,
"and remaining there some time, the
"consequences (to a most captivating
"young woman left without a protector)
"were such, as to cause a separation on
"his return.—Her Ladyship has left one
"child, a daughter, about fifteen."

Lord

Lord Elmwood had so much feeling upon reading this, as to lay down the paper, and not take it up again for several minutes—nor did he taste his chocolate during this interval, but leaned his elbow on the table and rested his head upon his hand.—He then rose up—walked two or three times across the room—sat down again—took up the paper—and read as usual.——Nor let the vociferous mourner, or the perpetual weeper, here complain of his want of sensibility—but let them remember Lord Elmwood was a man—a man of understanding—of courage—of fortitude—with all, a man of the nicest feelings—and who shall say, but that at the time he leaned his head upon his hand, and rose to walk away the sense of what he felt, he might not feel as much as Lady Elmwood did in her last moments.

Be

be this as it may, his Lordship's susceptibility on the occasion was not suspected by any one.—He passed that day the same as usual; the next day too, and the day after.—On the morning of the fourth day, he sent for his steward to his study, and after talking of other business, said to him,

"Is it true that Lady Elmwood is dead?"

"It is, my Lord." replied the man.

His Lordship looked unusually grave, and at this reply, fetched an involuntary sigh.

"Mr. Sandford," my lord, continued the steward, "sent me word of the news, but left it to my own discretion, whether I made your Lordship acquainted with it or not."

"Where is Sandford?" asked Lord Elmwood.

"He

"He was with my Lady," replied the steward.

"When she died?" asked his Lordship.

"Yes, my Lord."

"I am glad of it — he will see every thing she desired done. — Sandford is a good man, and would be a friend to every body."

"He is a very good man indeed, my Lord."

There was now a silence. — Mr. Giffard then bowing, said, "Has your Lordship any farther commands?"

"Write to Sandford," said Lord Elmwood, hesitating as he spoke, "and tell him to have every thing performed as she desired. — And whoever she may have selected for the guardian of her child, has my consent to act as such. — Nor in one instance, where I myself am

nor

not concerned, will I contradict her will."
—The tears ruſhed to his eyes as he ſaid this, and cauſed them to ſtart in the ſteward's—obſerving which, he ſternly reſumed,

"Do not ſuppoſe from this converſation, that any of thoſe reſolutions I have long ſince taken are, or will be, changed—they are the ſame; and ſhall continue the ſame:—and your interdiction, Sir, (as well as every other perſon's) remains juſt the ſame as formerly; never to mention this ſubject to me in future."

"My Lord, I always obeyed you," replied Mr. Giffard, "and hope I always ſhall."

"I hope ſo too," replied his Lordſhip, in a threatening accent—"Write to Sandford," continued he, "to let him know my pleaſure, and that is all you have to do."

The

The steward bowed and withdrew.

But before his letter arrived to Sandford, Sandford arrived in town; and Mr. Giffard related to him word for word what had passed between him and his Lord. Upon every occasion, and upon every topic, except that of Lady Elmwood and her child, Sandford was just as free with Lord Elmwood as he had ever been; and as usual (after his interview with the steward) went into his Lordship's apartment without any previous notice. His Lordship shaked him by the hand as upon all other meetings; and yet, whether his fears suggested it or not, Sandford thought he appeared more cool and reserved with him than common.

During the whole day, the slightest mention of Lady Elmwood, or of her child, was cautiously avoided—and not till the evening, (after Sandford had rung for his candle to retire to rest, it was brought, and he had wished his Lordship good night) did he dare to mention the subject.——He then, after taking leave, and going to the door—turned back and said, "My Lord,"——

It was easy to guess on what he was preparing to speak—his voice failed, the tears began to trickle down his cheeks, he took out his handkerchief, and could proceed no farther.

"I thought," said Lord Elmwood angrily, "I thought I had given my orders upon this subject—did not my steward write them to you?"

"He did, my Lord," said Sandford, humbly,

humbly, "but I was ſet out before they arrived."

"Has he not *told* you my mind then?" cried his Lordſhip, more angrily ſtill.

"He has;" replied Sandford, — "But"——

"But what, Sir?"—cried Lord Elmwood.

"Your Lordſhip," continued Sandford, "was miſtaken in ſuppoſing Lady Elmwood left a will; ſhe left none."

"No will? no will at all?"—ſaid his Lordſhip, ſurpriſed.

"No, my Lord," anſwered Sandford, "ſhe wiſhed every thing to be as you willed."

"She left me all the trouble, then, you mean?"

"No great trouble, Sir; for except two perſons, her Ladyſhip has not left any one elſe to hope for your protection."

"And who are thoſe two?" cried he haſtily.

"One, my Lord, I need not name—the other is Miſs Woodley."

There was a delicacy and an humility, in the manner in which Sandford delivered this reply, that Lord Elthwood could *not* reſent, and he only returned,

"Miſs Woodley, is ſhe yet living?"

"She is—I left her at the houſe I came from."

"Well, then," anſwered his Lordſhip, "you muſt ſee that my ſteward provides for thoſe two perſons.—That care I leave to you—and ſhould there be any complaints, on you they fall."

Sandford bowed and was going.

"And now," reſumed his Lordſhip, in a ſtern and exalted voice, "let me *never* hear again on this ſubject.—You have full power to act in regard to the perſons

perſons you have mentioned; and upon you their ſituation, their care, their whole management depend—but be ſure, you never let them be named before me, from this moment."

"Then," ſaid Sandford, "as this muſt be the laſt time they are mentioned, I muſt now take the opportunity to diſburthen my mind of a charge"——

"What charge?" — cried his Lordſhip, moroſely interrupting him.

"Though Lady Elmwood, my Lord, left no will behind, ſhe left a requeſt."

"Requeſt"—ſaid his Lordſhip, ſtarting—"If it is for me to ſee her daughter, I tell you now before you aſk, I will not grant it—for by heaven (and he ſpoke and looked moſt ſolemnly) though I have no reſentment to the innocent child, and wiſh her happy, yet I will never ſee her.—Never, for her mother's ſake, ſuffer

my heart to be again ſoftened by an object I might doat on.—Therefore, Sir, if that is the requeſt, it is already anſwered; my will is fixed."

"The requeſt, my Lord," replied Sandford, (taking out a pocket book from whence he drew ſeveral papers) "is contained in this letter; nor do I rightly know what its contents are."—And he held it out to him.

"Is it Lady Elmwood's writing?" cried his Lordſhip, extremely diſcompoſed."

"It is, my Lord—She called for ink and paper and wrote it a few days before ſhe died, and enjoined me to deliver it to you, with my own hands."

"I refuſe to read it."—cried he, putting it from him—and trembling while he did ſo.

"She

"She desired me," said Sandford, (still presenting the letter) "to conjure you to read it, *for her father's sake.*"

Lord Elmwood took it instantly.—But as soon as it was in his hand, he seemed distressed to know what he should do with it—in what place, to go to read it—or how fortify himself against its contents.—He appeared ashamed too, that he had been so far prevailed upon, and said, by way of excuse,

"For Mr. Milner's sake I would do much — nay, any thing, but that to which, I have just now sworn never to consent.—For his sake I have borne a great deal—for his sake alone, his daughter died my wife.—You know, no other motive than respect for him, prevented my divorcing her.——Pray (and he hesitated) was she buried with him?"

"No, my Lord—she expreſſed no ſuch deſire; and as that was the caſe, I did not think it neceſſary to carry the corpſe ſo far."

At the word corpſe, Lord Elmwood ſhrunk, and looked ſhocked beyond meaſure—but recovering himſelf, ſaid, "I am ſorry for it;—for he loved *her* ſincerely, if ſhe did not love him—and I wiſh they had been buried together.

"It is not then too late," ſaid Sandford, and was going on—but his Lordſhip interrupted him.

"No, no—we will have no diſturbing of the dead."

"Read her letter then," ſaid Sandford, "and bid her reſt in peace."

"If it is in my power," returned his Lordſhip, "to grant what ſhe aſks I will—but if her demand is what I apprehend, I cannot, I will not, bid her reſt

reſt by complying.—You know my reſolution, and my diſpoſition, and take care how you provoke me.—You may do an injury to the very perſon you are ſeeking to befriend—the very maintenance I mean to allow her daughter I can withdraw."

Poor Sandford, all alarm at this menace, replied with energy, "My Lord, unleſs you begin the ſubject, I never will preſume to mention it again."

"I take you at your word," returned his Lordſhip," and in conſequence of that, and that alone, we are friends.—Good night, Sir."

Sandford bowed with all humility, and they went to their ſeparate bedchambers.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER Lord Elmwood had retired into his chamber, it was ſome time before he read the letter Sandford had given him. He firſt walked backwards and forwards in the room — he then began to take off ſome part of his dreſs, but did it ſlowly. At length he diſmiſſed his valet, and ſitting down, took the letter from his pocket. — He looked at the ſeal, but not at the direction; for he ſeemed to dread to ſee Lady Elmwood's hand writing.—He then laid it on the table, and began again to undreſs. He did not proceed, but taking up the letter quickly, (with a kind of effort

effort in making the reſolution) broke it open. Theſe were its contents:

"My Lord,

"Who writes this letter I well know "—I well know alſo to whom it is addreſſed—I feel with the moſt power "ful force both our ſituations;—nor "ſhould I dare to offer you even this "humble petition, but that at the time "you receive it, there will be no ſuch "perſon as I am in exiſtance.

"For myſelf, then, all concern will "be over—but there is a care that purſues me to the grave, and threatens "my want of repoſe even there.

"I leave a child—I will not call her "mine, that has undone her—I will not "call her yours, that will be of no avail. —I pre-

"—I present her before you as the grand "daughter of Mr. Milner.—Oh! do "not refuse an asylum even in your "own house, to the destitute offspring "of your friend; the last, and only "remaining branch of his family.

"Receive her into your household, "be her condition there ever so abject. "—I cannot write distinctly what I "would—my senses are not impaired, "but the powers of expression are.—The "unfortunate child in the scripture (a "lesson I have studied) his complaint, "has made this wish cling so fast to my "heart, that without the distant hope of "its being fulfilled, death would have "more terrors than my weak mind could "support.

"I will

"I will go to my father; how many "servants live in my father's houſe, and "are fed with plenty, while I ſtarve in a "foreign land?"

"I do not aſk a parent's feſtive rejoic-"ing at her approach—I do not even "aſk her father to behold her;—but let "her live under his protection.—For her "grandfather's ſake do not refuſe this—"to the child of his child whom he "truſted to your care, do not refuſe it.

"Be her hoſt; I remit the tie of "being her parent.—Never ſee her—"but let her ſometimes live under the "ſame roof with you.

"It is Miſs Milner your ward, to "whom you never refuſed a requeſt, "ſuplicates you—not now for your ne-"phew Ruſhbrook, but for one ſo much

more

"more dear, that a denial——she dares
"not suffer her thoughts to glance that
"way.—She will hope—and in that
"hope, bids you farewell, with all the
"love she ever bore you.

"Farewell Lord Elmwood—and be-
"fore you throw this letter from you with
"contempt or anger, cast your imagi-
"nation into the gravewhere I am lying.
"—Reflect upon all the days of my past
"life—the anxious moments I have
"known, and what has been their end.—
"Behold *me*, also—in my altered face
"there is no anxiety—no joy or sorrow
"—all is over.——My whole frame is
"motionless—my heart beats no more.
"—Look at my horrid habitation, too,
"—and ask yourself—whether I am an
"object of resentment?"

While

While Lord Elmwood read this letter, it trembled in his hand: he once or twice wiped the tears from his eyes as he read, and once laid the letter down for a few minutes. At its conclusion the tears flowed fast down his face; but he seemed both ashamed and angry they did, and was going to throw the paper upon the fire; he however suddenly checked his hand, and putting it hastily into his pocket, went to bed.

CHAP.

CHAPTER V.

THE next morning, when Lord Elmwood and Sandford met at breakfaſt, Sandford was pale with fear for the ſucceſs of Lady Elmwood's letter—his Lordſhip was pale too, but there was beſide upon his face ſomething which evidently marked he was diſpleaſed—Sandford obſerved it, and was all humbleneſs, both in his words and looks, in order to ſoften him.

As ſoon as the breakfaſt was removed, his Lordſhip drew Lady Elmwood's letter from his pocket, and holding it towards Sandford, ſaid,

"That

"That may be of more value to you, than it is to me, therefore I give it you."

Sandford called up a look of ſurpriſe, as if he did not know the letter again.

"'Tis Lady Elmwood's letter," ſaid his Lordſhip, "and I give it to you for two reaſons."

Sandford took it, and putting it up, aſked fearfully "What thoſe two reaſons were?"

"Firſt," ſaid Lord Elmwood, "becauſe I think it is a relick you may like to preſerve—my ſecond reaſon is, that you may ſhow it to her daughter, and let her know why, and on what conditions I grant her mother's requeſt."

"You do then grant it?" cried Sandford joyfully; "I thank you — you are kind—you are conſiderate."

"Be not too hasty in your gratitude," returned his Lordship, "you may have cause to recall it."

"I know what you have said," replied Sandford, "You have said you grant Lady Elmwood's request — you cannot recall these words, nor I my gratitude."

"Do you know what her request is?" said Lord Elmwood.

"Not exactly, my Lord—I told you before, I did not; but it is no doubt something in favour of her child."

"I think not." replied his Lordship, "Such as it is, however, I grant it. But in the strictest sense of the word — no farther;—and one neglect of my commands, releases my promise totally."

"We will take care, Sir, not to disobey them."

"Then

"Then liſten to what they are—and to you I give the charge of delivering them again.—Lady Elmwood has petitioned me in the name of her father, (a name I reverence) to give his grandchild the ſanction of my protection.—In the litteral ſenſe, to ſuffer her to reſide occaſionally at one of my ſeats; diſpenſing at the ſame time with my ever ſeeing her."

"And you will comply?"

"I will, till ſhe encroaches on this conceſſion, and dare to aſk for a greater.—I will, while ſhe avoids my ſight, or the giving me any remembrance of her.—But whether by deſign or by accident, I ever ſee or hear from her; that moment my compliance to her mother's ſupplication ceaſes, and I abandon her once more."

Sandford ſighed.—His Lordſhip continued.

"I am glad her requeſt ſtopped where it did.—I would rather comply with her deſires than not; and I rejoice they are ſuch as I can grant with eaſe and honour to myſelf. I am ſeldom now at Elmwood houſe; let her daughter go there;—the few weeks or months I am down in the ſummer ſhe may eaſily in that extenſive houſe avoid me—while ſhe does, ſhe lives in ſecurity — when ſhe does not, you know my reſolution."

Sandford bowed — his Lordſhip reſumed.

"Nor can it be a hardſhip to obey this command — ſhe cannot lament the ſeparation from a parent whom ſhe never knew——" Sandford was going eagerly to prove the error of that aſſertion, but his Lordſhip prevented him ſaying, "In a word—

a word—without farther argument—if ſhe obeys me in this, I certainly provide for her as my daughter during my life, and leave her a fortune at my death—but if ſhe dares——"

Sandford interrupted the menace he ſaw prepared for utterance, ſaying, "And you ſtill mean, I ſuppoſe, to make Mr. Ruſhbrook your heir?".

"Have you not heard me ſay ſo? And do you imagine I have changed my determination? I am not given to alter my reſolutions, Mr. Sandford; and I thought you knew I was not;—beſides, will not my title be extinct, whoever I make my heir?—Could any thing but a ſon have preſerved my title?"

"Then it is yet poſſible——"

"By marrying again, you mean?—No—no—I have had enough of mar-

riage — and Henry Rushbrook I leave my heir. Therefore, Sir——"

"My Lord, I do not presume——"

"Do not, Sandford, and we may still be friends.—But I am not to be controlled as formerly; my temper is changed of late; changed to what it was originally; till your scholastic and religious rules reformed it. You may remember, how troublesome it was, to conquer my stubborn disposition in my youth; then, indeed, you did; but in my manhood you will find the task more difficult."

Sandford again repeated "He should not presume——"

To which his Lordship again made answer, "Do not, Sandford;" and added, "For I have a sincere regard for you, and should be loath at these years to quarrel with you seriously."

Sandford

Sandford turned away his head to hide his tears.

"Nay, if we do quarrel," resumed his Lordship, "You know it must be your own fault;—and as this is a theme the most likely of any (indeed the only one on which we can have a difference such as we cannot forgive) take care never from this day to resume it;—indeed that of itself, is an offence I will not pardon.—I have been clear and explicit in all I have said; there can be no fear of mistaking my meaning, therefore all future explanation is unnecessary—nor will I permit a word, or a hint on the subject from any one, without showing my resentment to the hour of my death." He was going out of the room.

"But before we bid adieu to the subject for ever, my Lord—there was another person whom I named to you——"

"Do you mean Miss Woodley?—Oh, by all means let her live at Elmwood House too.—On consideration, I have no objection to see Miss Woodley at any time—I shall be glad to see her.—do not let *her* be frightened at me—to her I shall be the same, I have always been."

"She is a good woman, my Lord," cried Sandford, pleased.

"You need not tell me that, Mr. Sandford; I know her worth."—And his Lordship left the room.

Sandford, to relieve Miss Woodley and her lovely charge from the suspense in which he had left them, set off for their habitation the next day; in order himself to conduct them from thence to Elmwood House, and appoint some retired part of it for Lady Matilda, against the annual visit her father

father paid there. But before he left London, Giffard, the steward, took an opportunity to wait upon him, and let him know, that his Lord had acquainted him, with the consent he had given for his daughter to be admitted at Elmwood Castle; and upon what restrictions; likewise that he had denounced the most severe threats, should these restrictions be broken. Sandford thanked Giffard for his friendly information, which served him as a second warning of the circumspection that was necessary; and having taken leave of his Lordship under the pretence "he could not live in the smoke of London," he set out for the north.

It is unnecessary to say with what delight Sandford was received by Miss Woodley, and the hapless daughter of Lady Elmwood, even before he told his errand.

errand. They both loved him sincerely; more especially Lady Matilda; whose forlorn state, and innocent sufferings, had ever excited his compassion in the extremest degree, and had caused him ever to treat her with the utmost affection, tenderness, and respect. She knew, too, how much he had been her mother's friend; for that she also loved him; and being honoured with the friendship of her father, she looked up to him with reverence and awe. For Matilda (with an excellent understanding, a sedateness above her years, and early accustomed to the most private converse between Lady Elmwood and Miss Woodley) was perfectly acquainted with the whole fatal history of her mother; and was by her taught, that respect and admiration of her father's virtues which they justly merited.

Notwith-

Notwithstanding the joy of beholding Mr. Sandford, once more to cheer by his presence their solitary dwelling; no sooner were the first kind greetings over, than the dread of what he might have to inform them, possessed both poor Matilda and Miss Woodley so powerfully, their gladness was changed into affright. —Their apprehensions were far more forcible than their curiosity;—they durst not ask a question, and even began to wish he would continue silent upon the subject, on which they feared to listen.—For near two hours he was so.——At length, after a short interval from speaking, (during which they waited with anxiety for what he might next say) he turned to Lady Matilda, and said,

"You don't ask for your father, my dear."

"I did

"I did not know it was proper," ſhe replied timidly.

"It is always proper," anſwered Sandford, "for *you* to think of him, though he ſhould never think on you."

She burſt into tears, ſaying, ſhe "*did* think of him, but ſhe felt an apprehenſion at mentioning his name."—and ſhe wept bitterly while ſhe ſpoke.

"Nay, do not think I reproved you," ſaid Sandford; "I but told you what was right."

"Nay," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "it is not for that ſhe cries thus—ſhe fears her father has not complied with her mother's requeſt.—Perhaps not even read her letter?"

"Yes, he has read it," returned Sandford.

"Oh Heavens!" exclaimed Matilda, "claſping

clasping her hands together, and the tears falling faster still.

"Do not be so much alarmed, my dear," said Miss Woodley; "you know we are prepared for the worst; and you know you promised your mother, whatever your fate was, to submit with patience."

"Yes," replied Matilda, "and I am prepared for every thing, but my father's refusal to my dear mother."

"Your father has not refused your mother's request." replied Sandford. She was leaping from her seat in ecstasy.

"But," continued he, "do you know what her request was?"

"Not entirely," replied Matilda, "and since it is granted I am careless. But she told me her letter concerned none but me."

—To explain perfectly to Matilda Lady Elmwood's letter, and that ſhe might perfectly underſtand upon what terms ſhe was admitted into Elmwood Houſe, Sandford now read the letter to her; and repeated, as nearly as he could remember, the whole of the converſation that paſſed between Lord Elmwood and himſelf; not even ſparing, with an erroneous delicacy, any of thoſe threats her father had denounced, ſhould ſhe dare to break through the limits he preſcribed—nor did he try to ſoften, in one inſtance, a word his Lordſhip uttered. She liſtened ſometimes with tears, ſometimes with hope, but always with awe, and terror, to every ſentence wherein her father was concerned. Once ſhe called him cruel—then exclaimed "he was kind;" but at the end of Sandford's intelligence, concluded ſhe was happy

and

and grateful for the boon beſtowed.—Even her mother had not a more exalted and tranſcendent idea of Lord Elmwood's worth, than his daughter had formed; and this little bounty juſt obtained, had not been greater in her mother's eſtimation, than it was now in her's.—Miſs Woodley, too, ſmiled at the proſpect before her—ſhe eſteemed Lord Elmwood beyond any mortal living—ſhe was proud to hear what he had ſaid in her praiſe, and overjoyed at the proſpect ſhe ſhould be once again in his company; picturing, at the ſame time, a thouſand of the brighteſt hopes, from watching every emotion of his ſoul, and catching every proper occaſion to excite, or increaſe, his paternal ſentiments.—Yet ſhe had the prudence to conceal thoſe vague hopes from his child, leſt a diſappointment might prove fatal; and

aſſuming

assuming a behaviour not too much elated or depressed, she advised they should hope for the best, but yet, as usual, expect and prepare for the worst.——After taking measures for quitting their melancholy abode; within the fortnight they all departed for Elmwood Castle.—Matilda, Miss Woodley, and even Sandford, first visiting Lady Elmwood's grave, and bedewing it with their tears.

CHAPTER VI.

IT was on a dark evening in the month of March, that Lady Matilda, accompanied by Sandford and Miſs Woodley, arrived at Elmwood Caſtle, the magnificent ſeat of her father.—Sandford choſe the evening; rather to ſteal into the Houſe privately, than by any appearance of parade, ſuffer Lord Elmwood to be reminded of it by the public prints, or by any other accident.—Nor would he give the neighbours or ſervants the ſlighteſt reaſon to ſuppoſe, the daughter of their Lord was admitted into his houſe in any other ſituation than, that, which ſhe really was.

As the Porter opened the gates of the avenue to the carriage that brought them, Matilda felt an awful, and yet a gladſome ſenſation no terms can deſcribe.—As ſhe entered the door of the houſe this ſenſation increaſed—and as ſhe paſſed along the ſpacious hall, the ſplendid ſtaircaſe, and many ſtately apartments, wonder! With a crowd of the tendereſt, yet moſt afflicting, ſentiments ruſhed to her heart.—She gazed with aſtoniſhment!—ſhe reflected with more.

"And is *my father* the maſter of this houſe?" ſhe cried—"And was my mother once the miſtreſs of this houſe?"—Here a flood of tears relieved her from a part of that burthen, which was before inſupportable.

"Yes." replied Sandford, "And you are the miſtreſs of it now, till your father arrives."

"Good

"Good God!" exclaimed she, "and will he ever arrive? and shall I live to sleep under the same roof with my father?"

"My dear," replied Miss Woodley, "have not you been told so?"

"Yes," said she, "but though I heard it with extreme pleasure, yet the idea never so forcibly affected me as at this moment.—I now feel, as the reality approaches, this has been kindness sufficient—I do not ask for more—I am now convinced, from what this trial makes me feel, that to see my father, would cause a sensation, a feeling, I could not survive."

The next morning gave to Matilda more objects full of admiration and wonder, as she walked over the extensive gardens, groves, and other pleasure

grounds belonging to the houſe. She, who had never been beyond the dreary, ruinate place where her deceaſed mother had choſen her reſidence, was naturally ſtruck with amazement and delight at the grandeur of a ſeat, which travellers have come for miles to ſee, and not thought their time miſpent.

There was one object, however, among all ſhe ſaw, which attracted her attention above the reſt, and ſhe would ſtand for hours to look at it—This was a full length portrait of Lord Elmwood, eſteemed a very capital picture, and a great likeneſs—to this picture ſhe would ſigh and weep; though when it was firſt pointed out to her, ſhe ſhrunk back with fear, and it was ſome time before ſhe dared venture to caſt her eyes completely upon it. In the features of her father

ſhe

ſhe was proud to diſcern the exact moulds in which her own appeared to have been modelled; yet Matilda's perſon, ſhape, and complection were ſo extremely like what her mother's once were, that at the firſt glance ſhe appeared to have a ſtill greater reſemblance of her, than of her father—but her mind and manners were all Lord Elmwood's; ſoftened by the delicacy of her ſex, the extreme tenderneſs of her heart, and the melancholy of her ſituation.

She was now in her ſeventeenth year—of the ſame age, within a year and a few months, of her mother when ſhe became the ward of Dorriforth.—She was juſt three years old when her father went abroad, and remembered ſomething of bidding him farewell; but more of taking cher-

ries from his hand as he pulled them from the tree to give to her.

Educated in the school of adversity, and inured to retirement from her infancy, she had acquired a taste for all those amusements which a recluse life affords.—She was fond of walking and riding—was accomplished in the arts of music and drawing, by the most careful instructions of her mother—and as a scholar she excelled most of her sex, from the great pains Sandford had taken with that part of her education, and the great abilities he possessed for the task.

In devoting certain hours of the day to study with him, others to music, riding, and such recreations, Matilda's time never appeared tedious at Elmwood House, although she neither received

nor

not paid one visit—for it was soon divulged in the neighbourhood upon what stipulation she resided at her father's, and intimated, that the most prudent and friendly behaviour of the friends both of her father and of herself, would be, to take no notice whatever that she lived among them: and as Lord Elmwood's will was a law all around, such was the consequence, of his will being known or supposed.

Neither did Miss Woodley regret the want of visiters, but found herself far more satisfied in her present situation, than her most sanguine hopes could have formed.—She had a companion whom she loved with an equal fondness, with which she had loved her deceased mother; and frequently in this charming mansion, where she had so often beheld

Lady Elmwood, her imagination pictured Matilda as her riſen from the grave in her former youth, health, and exquiſite beauty.

In peace, in content, though far from happineſs, the days and weeks paſſed away till about the middle of Auguſt, when preparations began to be made for the arrival of Lord Elmwood.—The week in which he was to come was at length fixed, and ſome part of his retinue was arrived before him.—When this was told to Matilda ſhe ſtarted, and looked juſt as her mother at her age often times had done, when, in ſpite of her love, ſhe was conſcious ſhe had offended him, and was terrified at his approach. Sandford obſerving this, put out his hand, and taking hers ſhook it kindly; and bade her (but it was not in a cheer-

a cheerful tone) "not be afraid." This gave her no confidence; and she began, before his Lordſhip's arrival, to ſeclude herſelf in thoſe apartments which were allotted for her during the time of his ſtay; and in the timorous expectation of his coming, her appetite declined and ſhe loſt all her colour. — Even Miſs Woodley, whoſe ſpirits had been for ſome time elated with the hopes ſhe had formed, on drawing near to the teſt, found thoſe hopes vaniſhed; and though ſhe endeavoured to conceal it, ſhe was replete with apprehenſions. — Sandford, had certainly fewer fears than either; yet upon the eve of the day on which his patron was to arrive, he was evidently caſt down.

Lady Matilda once aſked him — "Are you certain, Mr. Sandford, you made no miſtake in reſpect to what Lord Elmwood ſaid, when he granted my mother's

mother's request? Are you sure he did grant it?—Was there nothing equivocal on which he may ground his displeasure should he hear I am here?—Oh! do not let me hazard the being once again turned out of his house!—Oh! save me from provoking him perhaps to curse me."—And here she clasped her hands together with the most fervent petition, in the dread of what might happen.

"If you doubt my word or my senses," said Sandford, "call Giffard, and let him inform you;—my Lord repeated the same words to him he did to me."

Though from her reason Matilda could not doubt of any mistake from Mr. Sandford, yet her fears suggested a thousand scruples; and this reference to the steward she received with the utmost satisfaction, (though she did not think it necessary to apply to him) as it perfectly convinced

vinced her of the folly of those ſuſpicions ſhe had entertained.

"And yet, Mr. Sandford," ſaid ſhe, "if it is ſo, why are you leſs cheerful than you were? I cannot help thinking but it muſt be the expectation of Lord Elmwood, which has cauſed in you this change."

"I don't know;" replied Sandford, careleſſly, "but I believe I am grown afraid of your father.—His temper is a great deal altered from what it once was—he exalts his voice, and uſes harſh expreſſions upon the leaſt provocation—his eyes flaſh lightning, and his face is diſtorted with anger on the ſlighteſt motives—he turns away his old ſervants at a moment's warning, and no conceſſion can make their peace.—In a word, I am more at my eaſe when I am away from him—and I really believe," added he with

with a ſmile, but with a tear at the ſame time, "I really believe I am more afraid of him in my age, than he was of me when he was a boy."

Miſs Woodley was preſent; ſhe and Matilda looked at one another; and each ſaw the other turn pale, at this deſcription.

The day at length came on which Lord Elmwood was expected to dinner. ——It had been a high gratification to his daughter to have gone to the top-moſt window of the houſe, to have only beheld his chariot enter the avenue; but it was a gratification which her fears, her tremor, her extreme ſenſibility would not permit her to enjoy.

Miſs Woodley and ſhe ſat down that day to dinner in their retired apartments; which were detached from the other part

of

of the houſe by a gallery; and of the door leading to the gallery they had a key to impede any one from paſſing that way, without firſt ringing a bell; to anſwer which, was the ſole employment of a ſervant who was placed there during his Lordſhip's reſidence, leſt by any accident he might chance to come near that unfrequented part of the houſe; on which occaſion the man was to give immediate notice to his Lady.

Miſs Woodley and ſhe ſat down to dinner, but did not dine.—Sandford ate, as uſual, with Lord Elmwood.—When the ſervant brought up tea, Miſs Woodley aſked him if he had ſeen his Lord—The man anſwered, "Yes, Madam; and he looks vaſtly well."—Matilda wept with joy to hear it.

About nine in the evening Sandford rung at the bell, and was admitted—and never was he ſo welcome—Matilda hung upon him, as if his recent ſociety with her father had endeared him to her more than ever; and ſtaring anxiouſly in his face, ſeemed to aſk him to tell her ſomething of Lord Elmwood, and ſomething that ſhould not alarm her.

"Well—how do you find yourſelf?" ſaid he to her.

"How are you, Mr. Sandford?" ſhe returned, with a ſigh.

"Oh very well," replied he.

"Is my Lord in a good temper?" aſked Miſs Woodley.

"Yes, very well," replied Sandford, with indifference.

"Did he ſeem glad to ſee you?" aſked Matilda.

"He

"He shook me by the hand," replied Sandford.

"That was a sign he was glad to see you, was it not?" said Matilda.

"Yes; but he could not do less."

"Nor more," replied she.

"He looks very well, our servant tells us," said Miss Woodley.

"Extremely well indeed," answered Sandford: "and, to tell the truth, I never saw him in better spirits."

"That is well:" said Matilda, and sighed a weight of fears from her heart.

"Where is he now, Mr. Sandford?"

"Gone to take a walk about his grounds, and so I stole here the time."

"What was your conversation during dinner?"

"Horses, hay, farming, and politics."

"Won't you sup with him?"

"I shall

"I shall see him again before I go to bed."

"And again to-morrow!"—cried Matilda, "what happiness!"

"He has visiters to-morrow," said Sandford, "coming for a week or two."

"Thank heaven!" said Miss Woodley, "he will then be diverted from thinking on us."

"Do you know," returned Sandford, "it is my firm opinion, that his thinking of ye at present, is the cause of his good spirits."

"Oh, heavens!" cried Matilda, lifting up her hands with rapture.

"Nay, do not mistake me;" said Sandford; "I would not have you build a foundation for joy upon this; for if he is in spirits that you are in this house—so near him—positively under his protection—yet he will not allow himself to think

think that, is the cauſe of his content—and the ſentiments he has adopted, and are now become natural to him, will remain the ſame as ever; nay, perhaps with greater force, while he ſuſpects his weakneſs (as he calls it) acting in oppoſition."

"If he does but think of me with tenderneſs," cried Matilda, "I am recompenſed."

"And what recompenſe would his kind thoughts be to you," ſaid Sandford, "were he to turn you out to beggary?"

"A great deal — a great deal," ſhe replied.

"But how are you to know he has theſe kind thoughts, while he gives you no proof of them?"

"No, Mr. Sandford; but *ſuppoſing* we could know them without the proof."

"But as that is impoſſible," anſwered he, "I ſhall ſuppoſe, till the proof appears, I am miſtaken."

Matilda looked deeply concerned that the argument ſhould conclude in her diſappointment; for to have believed herſelf thought of with tenderneſs by her father, would have alone conſtituted her happineſs.

When the ſervant came up with ſomething by way of ſupper, he told Mr. Sandford his Lordſhip was returned from his walk and had enquired for him; Sandford immediately bade his companions good night, and left them.

"How ſtrange is this!" cried Matilda, when Miſs Woodley and ſhe were alone, "My father within a few rooms of me, and yet I am debarred from ſeeing him!—Only by walking a few paces I might

I might be at his feet, and perhaps receive his bleſſing."

"You make me ſhudder," ſaid Miſs Woodley; "but ſome ſpirits leſs fearful than mine, might perhaps adviſe you to try the experiment."

"Not for worlds," returned Matilda; "no counſel could tempt me to ſuch temerity; and yet to entertain the thought, that it is poſſible I could do this, is a ſource of great comfort."

This converſation laſted till bed time, and later; for they ſat up beyond their uſual hour to indulge it.

Miſs Woodley ſlept little, but Matilda leſs—ſhe awaked repeatedly during the night, and every time ſighed to herſelf, "I ſleep in the ſame houſe with my father! Bleſſed ſpirit of my mother, look down and rejoice."

CHAPTER VII.

THE next day the whole Caſtle appeared to Lady Matilda (though ſhe was in ſome degree retired from it) all tumult and buſtle; as was uſually the caſe while his Lordſhip was there. She ſaw from her windows ſervants running acroſs the yards and park, horſes and carriages driving with fury, all the ſuit of a nobleman; and it ſeemed ſometimes to elate, at other times to depreſs her.

Theſe impreſſions however, and others of fear and anxiety, which her father's firſt arrival had excited, by degrees wore away; and after ſome ſhort time, ſhe was

was in the ſame tranquil ſtate ſhe enjoyed before he came.

He had viſitors, to ſtay a week or two; he paid ſome viſits himſelf for ſeveral days; and thus the time paſſed, till it was about four weeks ſince he arrived; during which, Sandford, with all his penetration, could never clearly diſcover whether he had once called to mind his daughter was living in the ſame houſe. He had not named her (that was not extraordinary) conſequently no one durſt name her to him; but he had not even mentioned Miſs Woodley, of whom he had ſo lately ſpoken in the kindeſt terms, and ſaid, "He ſhould take pleaſure in ſeeing her again." From theſe contradictions in Lord Elmwood's behaviour in reſpect to her, it was Miſs Woodley's plan neither to throw herſelf in his way,

or avoid him. She therefore frequently walked about the houſe while he was in it, not indeed wholly without reſtraint, but at leaſt with the ſhow of liberty. This freedom, indulged for ſome time without peril, became at laſt leſs cautious; and no ill conſequences ariſing from its practice, her ſcruples gradually ceaſed.

One morning, however, as ſhe was croſſing the large hall, thoughtleſs of danger, a footſtep at a diſtance alarmed her almoſt without knowing why—She ſtopped for a moment, thinking to return; the ſteps approached quicker, and before ſhe could retreat ſhe beheld Lord Elmwood at the other end of the hall, and perceived that he ſaw her.—It was now too late to heſitate what was to be done; ſhe could not go back, and had not

not courage to go on; ſhe therefore ſtood ſtill.—Diſconcerted, and much affected at his ſight, (their former intimacy coming to her mind, together with the many years, and many ſad occurrences paſſed, ſince ſhe laſt ſaw him) all her intentions, all her meditated plans how to conduct herſelf on ſuch an occaſion, gave way to a ſudden ſhock—and to make the meeting yet more diſtreſſing, her very fright ſhe knew muſt ſerve to recall more powerfully to his mind, the ſubject ſhe moſt wiſhed him to forget. The ſteward was with his Lordſhip, and as they came up cloſe by her ſide, Giffard obſerving him look at her earneſtly, ſaid ſoftly, but ſo as ſhe heard him, "My Lord, it is Miſs Woodley." Lord Elmwood's hat was off immediately, and coming to her with alacrity, he took her by the hand and ſaid, "Indeed, Miſs Woodley, I did not

know you—I am very glad to ſee you," and while he ſpoke, ſhook her hand with a cordiality her tender heart could not bear — and never did ſhe feel ſo hard a ſtruggle as to reſtrain her tears. But the thought of Matilda's fate—the idea of awaking in his mind a ſentiment that might irritate him againſt his child, wrought more forcibly than every other effort; and though ſhe could not reply diſtinctly, ſhe replied without weeping.—Whether he ſaw her embarraſſment, and wiſhed to releaſe her from it, or was in haſte to conceal his own; he left her almoſt inſtantly; but not till he had entreated ſhe would dine that very day with him and Mr. Sandford, who were to dine without other company.—She curtſied aſſent, and flew to tell Matilda what had occurred.—After liſtening with anxiety and joy to all ſhe told, Matilda laid

hold

hold of that hand the ſaid Lord Elmwood had held, and preſſed it to her lips with love and reverence.

When Miſs Woodley made her appearance at dinner, Sandford, (who had not ſeen her ſince the invitation, and did not know of it) looked amazed!—on which his Lordſhip ſaid, "Do you know, Sandford, I met Miſs Woodley this morning, and had it not been for Giffard I ſhould have paſſed her without knowing her—but Miſs Woodley, if I am not ſo much altered but that you knew me, I take it unkind you did not ſpeak firſt."——She was unable to ſpeak even now—he ſaw it, and changed the converſation; which Sandford was happy to join, for in the preſent diſcourſe he did not feel himſelf very comfortable.

As they advanced in their dinner, Miſs Woodley's and Sandford's embarraſſment diminiſhed; while Lord Elmwood in his turn became, not embarraſſed, but abſent and melancholy. — He now and then ſighed heavily—and called for wine much oftener than he was accuſtomed.

When Miſs Woodley took her leave, his Lordſhip invited her to dine with him and Sandford whenever it was convenient to her;—he ſaid many things, too, of the ſame kind, and all with the utmoſt civility, yet not with that warmth with which he had ſpoken in the morning — into that he had been ſurpriſed, while this coolneſs was the effect of reflection.

When

When ſhe came to Lady Matilda, and Sandford had joined them, they talked and deliberated on what had paſſed.—

"You acknowledge, Mr. Sandford," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "that you think my preſence affected Lord Elmwood ſo as to make him much more thoughtful than uſual; if you imagine theſe thoughts were upon Lady Elmwood, I will never intrude again; but if you ſuppoſe I cauſed him to think upon his daughter, I cannot go too often."

"I don't ſee how he can divide thoſe two objects in his mind," replied Sandford, "and therefore you muſt e'en viſit him on, and take your chance, what reflections you may inſpire—but, be they what they will, time, will take away from you that power of affecting him."

She concurred in the opinion, and occaſionally walked into his Lordſhip's apartments

apartments, dined, or took coffee with him, as the accident ſuited; and obſerved according to Sandford's preſcience, that time, wore off that impreſſion her viſits firſt made.—Lord Elmwood now became juſt the ſame before her, as before others. —She eaſily diſcerned, too, through all that politeneſs which he aſſumed—he was no longer the conſiderate, the forbearing character he formally was; but haughty, impatient, imperious, and more than ever, implacable,

CHAP-

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Lord Elmwood had been at his country ſeat about ſix weeks, Mr. Ruſhbrook, his nephew, and his adopted child, the friendleſs boy whom poor Lady Elmwood firſt introduced into his uncle's houſe, and by her kindneſs preſerved there—arrived from his travels, and was received by his Lordſhip with all that affectionate warmth due to the man he thought worthy to make his heir. Ruſhbrook had been a beautiful boy, and was now an extremely handſome young man; he had made an unuſual progreſs in his ſtudies, had completed the tour of Italy and Germany, and returned home with the air and addreſs of a per-

a perfect man of faſhion—there was, beſide, an elegance and perſuaſion in his manner almoſt irreſiſtible.—Yet with all thoſe accompliſhments, when he was introduced to Sandford, and put out his hand to take his, Sandford, with evident reluctance, gave it to him; and when Lord Elmwood aſked him, in the young man's preſence, "if he did not think his nephew greatly improved?" He looked at him from head to foot, and muttered "he could not ſay he obſerved it." The colour heightened in Mr. Ruſhbrook's face upon this occaſion, but he was too well bred not to be ſtill in perfect good humour.

Sandford ſaw this young man treated in the houſe of Lord Elmwood with the ſame reſpect and attention as if he had been his Lordſhip's ſon; and it was but probable

probable the old prieſt ſhould make a compariſon between the ſituation of him, and of Lady Matilda Elmwood.—Before her, it was Sandford's meaning to have concealed his thoughts upon the ſubject, and never to have mentioned it but with compoſure; that was, however, impoſſible—unuſed to conceal his feelings; at the name of Ruſhbrook his countenance would always change, and a ſarcaſtic ſneer, and ſometimes a frown of reſentment, force their way in ſpite of his reſolution.—Miſs Woodley, too, with all her boundleſs charity and good will, was, upon this occaſion, induced to limit their exceſs; and they did not extend ſo far as to reach poor Ruſhbrook—She even; and in *reality*, did not think him handſome or engaging in his manners—ſhe thought his gaiety friviloufneſs, his complaiſance affectation,

and

and his good humour impertinence.—It was impoſſible to conceal thoſe unfavourable ſentiments entirely from Matilda; for when the ſubject aroſe, as it frequently did, Miſs Woodley's undiſguiſed heart, and Sandford's undiſguiſed countenance, told them inſtantly.—Matilda had the underſtanding to imagine, ſhe was, perhaps, the object who had thus deformed Mr. Ruſhbrook, and frequently (though he was a ſtranger to her, and one who had cauſed her many a jealous heartach) frequently ſhe would ſpeak in his vindication.

"You are very good," ſaid Sandford one day to her; "you like him becauſe you know your father loves him."

This was a hard ſentence to the daughter of Lord Elmwood, to whom her father's love would have been more precious than any other bleſſing—She, however, checked the aſſault of envy, and kindly replied,

"My

"My mother loved him, too, Mr. Sandford."

"Yes," answered Sandford, "he has been a grateful man to your poor mother—She did not suppose when she took him into the house, when she intreated your father to take him, and through her caresses and officious praises of him to his uncle, first gave him that power he now possesses over him; she little foresaw, at that time, his ingratitude, and its effects."

"Very true," said Miss Woodley, with a heavy sigh.

"What ingratitude?" said Matilda; "do you suppose Mr. Rushbrook is the cause my father will not see me? Oh do not pay Lord Elmwood's motives so ill a compliment."

"I do not say he is the absolute cause," returned Sandford; "but if a

parent's heart is void, I would have it remain so, till ſtored by its lawful owner—a uſurper I deteſt."

"No one can take Lord Elmwood's heart by force," replied his daughter, "it muſt, I believe, be a free gift to the poſſeſſor; and as ſuch, whoever has it, has a right to it."

In this manner ſhe would plead the young man's excuſe—perhaps but to hear what could be ſaid in his diſfavour, for ſecretly his name was bitter to her—and once ſhe exclaimed in vexation, on Sandford's ſaying Lord Elmwood and Mr. Ruſhbrook were gone out ſhooting together,

"All that pleaſure is now eclipſed which I uſed to take in liſtening to the report of my father's gun, for I cannot now diſtinguiſh his, from his paraſite's."

Sandford

Sandford, much as he diſliked Ruſhbrook—for this expreſſion which comprised her father in the reflection, turned to Matilda in extreme anger; but as he ſaw the colour mount to her face, for what, in the ſtrong feelings of her heart, had eſcaped her lips, he did not ſay a word—and by a flood of tears that followed after, he rejoiced to ſee how much ſhe reproved herſelf.

Miſs Woodley, vext to the heart, and provoked every time ſhe ſaw Lord Elmwood and Ruſhbrook together, and ſaw the familiar terms on which this young man lived with his benefactor, now made her viſits to his Lordſhip very ſeldom.—If Lord Elmwood obſerved this, he did not appear to obſerve it; and though he received her very politely when ſhe did pay him a viſit, it was al-

ways very coldly; nor did she suppose if she never went, he would ever ask for her. For his daughter's sake, however, she thought it right sometimes to shew herself before him; for she knew it must be impossible that, with all his seeming indifference, Lord Elmwood could ever see her without thinking for a moment on his child; and what one fortunate thought might sometime bring about, was an object too serious for her to slight.—She therefore, after remaining confined to her apartments near three weeks, (excepting those short and anxious walks she and Matilda stole, while Lord Elmwood dined, or before he rose in a morning) went one forenoon into his Lordship's apartments, where as usual, she found him, Mr. Sandford, and Mr. Rushbrook.—After she had sat about half an hour, conversing with them

them all, though but very little with the latter, his Lordſhip was called out of the room upon ſome buſineſs; preſently after Sandford; and now, not much pleaſed with the companion with whom ſhe was left, ſhe roſe and was going likewiſe, when Ruſhbrook fixed his ſpeaking eyes upon her, and cried,

"Miſs Woodley, will you pardon me what I am going to ſay?"

"Certainly, Sir—You can, I am ſure, ſay nothing but what I muſt forgive."—But ſhe made this reply with a diſtance and a reſerve, very unlike the uſual manners of Miſs Woodley.

He looked at her earneſtly and cried, "Ah! Miſs Woodley, you don't behave ſo kindly to me as you uſed to do!"

"I do not underſtand you, Sir,"—ſhe replied, very gravely;—"Times are

changed, Mr. Ruſhbrook, ſince you were laſt here — you were then but a child."

"Yet I love all thoſe perſons now, I loved then;" replied he; "and ſo I ſhall for ever."

"But you miſtake, Mr. Ruſhbrook; I was not even then ſo very much the object of your affections — there were other ladies you loved better. — Perhaps you don't remember Lady Elmwood?"

"Don't I?" — cried he, "Oh!" (claſping his hands and lifting up his eyes to heaven) "ſhall I ever forget her?"

That moment Lord Elmwood opened the door; the converſation of courſe that moment ended; but confuſion at the ſudden ſurpriſe was on the face of both the parties — his Lordſhip ſaw it,

and

and looked at each by turns, with a ſternneſs that made poor Miſs Woodley ready to faint; while Ruſhbrook, with the moſt natural and happy laugh that ever was affected, cried, "No, don't tell my Lord, pray, Miſs Woodley."—She was more confuſed than before; and his Lordſhip turning to him, aſked what the ſubject was.—By this time he had invented one, and continuing his laugh, ſaid, "Miſs Woodley, my Lord, will to this day proteſt ſhe ſaw my apparition when I was a boy; and ſhe ſays it is a ſign I ſhall die young, and is really much affected at it."

Lord Elmwood turned away before this ridiculous ſpeech was concluded; yet ſo well had it been acted, he did not for an inſtant doubt its truth.

Miſs Woodley felt herſelf greatly re-

lieved; and yet so little is it in the power of those we dislike to do any thing to please us, that from this very circumstance, she formed a still more unfavourable opinion of Mr. Rushbrook than she had done before.—She saw in this little incident the art of dissimulation, cunning, and duplicity in its most glaring shape; and detested the method by which they had each escaped Lord Elmwood's suspicion, and perhaps anger, the more, because it was so dexterously managed.

Lady Matilda and Sandford were both in their turns informed of this trait in Mr. Rushbrook's character; and although Miss Woodley had the best of dispositions, and upon every occasion spoke the strictest truth, yet in relating this occurrence, she did not speak all the truth; for every circumstance that would have

have told to the young man's advantage, *litegally* ſlipped her memory.

The twenty ninth of October arrived; on which a dinner, a ball, and ſupper, was given by Lord Elmwood to all the neighbouring gentry — the peaſants alſo dined in the park off a roaſted bullock; ſeveral caſks of ale were diſtributed, and the bells of the village rung. — Matilda, who heard and ſaw ſome part of this feſtivity from her windows, inquired the cauſe; but even the ſervant who waited upon her had too much ſenſibility to tell her, and anſwered, "he did not know." Miſs Woodley however ſoon learnt the reaſon, and groaning with the painful ſecret, informed her, "Mr. Ruſhbrook on that day was come of age."

"My birth day was laſt week," replied Matilda; but not a word beſide.

In

In their retired apartments, the day paſſed away not only ſoberly, but almoſt ſilently; for to ſpeak upon any ſubject that did not engage their thoughts had been difficult, and to ſpeak upon the only one that did, had been afflictive.

Juſt as they were ſitting down to dinner their bell gently rung, and in walked Sandford.

"Why are not you among the revellers, Mr. Sandford?" cried Miſs Woodley, with an ironical ſneer—(the firſt her features ever wore)—"Pray, were not you invited to dine with the company?"

"Yes," replied Sandford; "but my head aked; and ſo I had rather come and take a bit with you."

Matilda, as if ſhe had beheld his heart as he ſpoke, clung round his neck and ſobbed on his boſom: he put her peeviſhly

peevishly away, crying, "Nonsense, nonsense—eat your dinner." But he did not eat himself.

CHAPTER IX.

ABOUT a week after this, Lord Elmwood went out two days for a viſit; conſequently Ruſhbrook was for that time maſter of the houſe. The firſt morning he went a ſhooting, and returning about noon, enquired of Sandford, who was ſitting in the room, if he had taken up a volume of plays left upon the table.—"I read no ſuch things." replied Sandford, and quitted the room abruptly. Ruſhbrook then rung for his ſervant, and deſired him to look for the book, aſking him angrily, "Who had been in the apartment? for he was ſure he had left it there when he went out."—The ſervant withdrew to enquire, and preſently returned

turned with the volume in his hand, and "Miſs Woodley's compliments, ſhe begs your pardon, Sir, ſhe did not know the book was yours, and hopes you will excuſe the liberty ſhe took."

"Miſs Woodley!" cried Ruſhbrook with ſurprize, "ſhe comes ſo ſeldom into theſe apartments, I did not ſuppoſe it was her who had it — take it back to her inſtantly, with my reſpects, and I beg ſhe will keep it."

The man went; but returned with the book again, and laying it on the table without ſpeaking, was going away; when Ruſhbrook, hurt at receiving no ſecond meſſage, ſaid, "I am afraid, Sir, you did very wrong in taking this book from Miſs Woodley."

"It was not from her I took it, Sir," replied the man, "it was from Lady Matilda."

Since

Since he had entered the houſe, Ruſhbrook had never before heard her name—he was ſhocked—confounded more than ever—and to conceal what he felt, inſtantly ordered the man out of the room.

In the mean time, Miſs Woodley and Matilda were talking over this trifling occurrence; and frivolous as it was, drew from it ſtrong concluſions of Ruſhbrook's inſolence and power.—In ſpite of her pride, the daughter of Lord Elmwood even wept at the inſult ſhe had received on this inſignificant occaſion; for the volume being merely taken from her at Mr. Ruſhbrook's command, ſhe felt an inſult; and the manner in which it was done by the ſervant, might contribute to the offence.

While Miſs Woodley and ſhe were upon this converſation, a note came from Ruſhbrook to Miſs Woodley, wherein he entreated he might be permitted to ſee her.—She ſent a verbal anſwer, "She was engaged." He ſent again, begging ſhe would name her own time. But certain of a ſecond denial, he followed the ſervant who took the laſt meſſage, and as Miſs Woodley came out of her apartment into the gallery to ſpeak to him, Ruſhbrook preſented himſelf, and told the man to retire.

"Mr. Ruſhbrook," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "this intruſion is inſupportable;—and deſtitute as you may think me of the friendſhip of Lord Elmwood"——

In the ardour with which Ruſhbrook was waiting to expreſs himſelf, he interrupted her, and caught hold of her hand.

She

She immediately ſnatched it from him, and withdrew into her chamber.

He followed, ſaying in a low voice, "Dear Miſs Woodley hear me."

At that juncture Lady Matilda, who was in an inner room, came out of it into Miſs Woodley's.—Perceiving a gentleman, ſhe ſtopped ſhort at the door.

Ruſhbrook caſt his eyes upon her, and ſtood motionleſs — his lips only moved. "Do not depart, Madam," ſaid he, "without hearing my apology for being here."

Though Matilda had never ſeen him ſince her infancy, there was no cauſe to tell her who it was that addreſſed her—his elegant and youthful perſon, joined to the incident which had juſt occurred, convinced her it was Ruſhbrook; and ſhe looked at him with an air of ſurpriſe, but with ſtill more, of dignity.

"Miſs

"Miſs Woodley is ſevere upon me, Madam," continued he, "ſhe judges me unkindly; and I am afraid ſhe will prepoſſeſs you with the ſame unfavourable ſentiments."

Still Matilda did not ſpeak, but looked at him with the ſame air of dignity.

"If, Lady Matilda," reſumed he, "I have offended you, and muſt quit you without pardon, I am more unhappy than I ſhould be with the loſs of your father's protection — more forlorn, than when an orphan boy, your mother firſt took pity on me."

At this laſt ſentence, Matilda turned her eyes on Miſs Woodley, and ſeemed in doubt what reply ſhe was to give.

Ruſhbrook immediately fell upon his knees — "Oh! Lady Matilda," cried he, "if you knew the ſenſations of my

heart, you would not treat me with this disdain."

"We can only judge of those sensations, Mr. Rushbrook," said Miss Woodley, "by the effect they have upon your conduct; and while you insult Lord and Lady Elmwood's daughter by an intrusion like this, and then ridicule her abject state by mockery, such as the present"——

He flew from his knees instantly, and interrupted her, crying "What can I do?—What am I to say, to make you change your opinion of me?—While Lord Elmwood has been at home I have kept at an awful distance; and though every moment I breathed was a wish to cast myself at his daughter's feet, yet as I feared, Miss Woodley, you were incensed against me, by what means was I to procure an interview but by strata-

gem

gem or force?—This accident has given a third method, and I had not strength, I had not courage, to let it pass.—Lord Elmwood will soon return, and we may both be hurried to town immediately;—then how for a tedious winter could I sustain the thought that I was despised, nay perhaps considered as an object of ingratitude, by the only child of my deceased benefactress."

Matilda replied with all her father's haughtiness, "Depend upon it, Sir, if you should ever enter my thoughts, it will only be as an object of envy."

"Suffer me then, Madam," said he, "as an earnest you do not think worse of me than I merit, suffer me to be sometimes admitted into your presence."

She scarcely permitted him to finish the period, before she replied, "This is the last time, Sir, we shall ever meet, de-

pend upon it — unleſs, indeed, Lord Elmwood ſhould delegate to you the control of me — his commands I never diſpute." And here ſhe burſt into a flood of tears.

Ruſhbrook walked to the window, and did not ſpeak for a ſhort time—then turning himſelf to make a reply, both Matilda and Miſs Woodley were ſomewhat ſurpriſed to ſee, he had ſhed tears too.—Having conquered them, he ſaid, "I will not offend you, Madam, by ſtaying one moment longer; and I give my honour, that, upon no pretence whatever, will I preſume to intrude here again.—Profeſſions, I find, have no weight, and only by this obedience to your orders can I give a proof of that reſpect which you inſpire;—and let the agitation I now feel, convince you, Lady Matilda, that, with all my ſeeming good

fortune,

fortune, I am not happier than yourſelf.—And ſo much was he agitated while he delivered this, it was with difficulty he came to the concluſion.—When he did, he bowed with reverence, as if he had left the preſence of a deity, and went away.

Matilda immediately entered the chamber ſhe had come from, and without caſting a ſingle look at Miſs Woodley, by which ſhe might gueſs of the opinion ſhe had formed of Mr. Ruſhbrook's conduct.—The next time they met they did not even mention his name; for they were aſhamed to own any partiality in his favour, and were too juſt to bring any ſerious accuſation againſt him.

But Miſs Woodley the day following communicated the intelligence of this

visit to Mr. Sandford, who not being present, and a witness of those marks of humility and respect which were conspicuous in the deportment of Mr. Rushbrook, was highly offended at his presumption; and threatened if he ever dared to force his company there again, he would acquaint Lord Elmwood with his arrogance, whatever might be the event.—Miss Woodley however, assured him, she believed he would have no cause for such a complaint, as the young man had made the most solemn promise never to commit the like offence; and she thought it her duty to enjoin Sandford, till he did repeat it, not to mention the circumstance, even to Rushbrook himself.

Matilda could not but feel a regard towards her father's heir in return for

that which he had ſo fervently declared for her; yet the more favourable her opinion of his mind and manners, the more he became a proper object of her jealouſy for the affections of Lord Elmwood, and was now conſequently an object of greater ſorrow to her, than when ſhe believed him leſs worthy.—This, was the reverſe on his part towards her—no jealouſy intervened to bar his admiration and eſteem, and the beauty of her perſon, and grandeur of her mien, not only confirmed, but improved, the exalted idea he had formed of her previous to their meeting, and which his affection to both her parents had inſpired.——The next time he ſaw his benefactor, he began to feel a new eſteem and regard for him, for his daughter's ſake; as he had at firſt an eſteem for her on the foundation of his love for Lord and Lady Elmwood—

He gazed with wonder at his uncle's insensibility to his own happiness, and longed to lead him to the jewel he cast away, though even his own expulsion should be the fatal consequence. — Such was the youthful, warm, generous, grateful, but unthinking mind of Rushbrook.

CHAP.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER this incident, Miſs Woodley left her own apartments leſs frequently than before—ſhe was afraid, though till now miſtruſt had been a ſtranger to her heart, ſhe was afraid duplicity might be concealed under the apparent friendſhip of Ruſhbrook; it did not indeed appear ſo from any part of his behaviour, but ſhe was apprehenſive for the fate of Matilda; ſhe diſliked him alſo, and therefore ſhe ſuſpected him.—For near three weeks ſhe had not now paid a viſit to Lord Elmwood, and though to herſelf every viſit was a pain, yet as Matilda took a delight in hearing of her father, what he ſaid, what he did, what his attention

tention ſeemed moſt employed on, and a thouſand other circumſtantial informations, in the detail of which, Sandford would ſcorn to be half ſo particular, it was a deprivation to her, Miſs Woodley did not go oftener.—Now too the middle of November had arrived, and it was expected his Lordſhip would ſhortly quit the country.

Partly therefore to indulge her hapleſs companion, and partly becauſe it was a neceſſary duty, Miſs Woodley paid his Lordſhip a morning viſit, and ſtaid dinner.—Ruſhbrook was officiouſly polite to her, (for that was the epithet ſhe gave his attention in relating it to Lady Matilda) yet ſhe owned he had not that forward impertinence ſhe had formerly diſcovered in him, but appeared much more grave and ſedate.

"But

"But tell me of my father." ſaid Matilda.

"I was going, my dear — but don't be concerned — don't let it vex you."

"What? what?" cried Matilda, frightened by the preface.

"Why, on my obſerving that I thought Mr. Ruſhbrook looked paler than uſual, and appeared not to be in perfect health, (which was really the caſe) your father expreſſed the greateſt anxiety imaginable; he ſaid he could not bear to ſee him look ſo ill, begged him with all the tenderneſs of a parent to take the advice of a phyſician, and added a thouſand other affectionate things."

"I deteſt Mr. Ruſhbrook."—ſaid Matilda, with her eyes flaſhing indignation.

"Nay, for ſhame," returned Miſs Woodley: "do you ſuppoſe I told you this, to make you hate him?"

"No,

"No, there was no occaſion for that," replied Matilda; "my ſentiments (though I have never before avowed them) were long ago formed; he was always an object which added to my unhappineſs; but ſince his daring intruſion into my apartments, he has been an object of my hatred."

"But now perhaps I may tell you ſomething to pleaſe you." cried Miſs Woodley.

"And what is that?" ſaid Matilda, with indifference; for the firſt intelligence had hurt her ſpirits too much to ſuffer her to liſten with pleaſure to any other.

"Mr. Ruſhbrook," continued Miſs Woodley, "replied to your father, his indiſpoſition was but a ſlight nervous fever, and he would defer a phyſician's advice till he went to London—on which his

his Lordſhip ſaid, "And when do you expect to be there?"—he replied, "Within a week or two, I ſuppoſe, my Lord." But your father anſwered, "I do not mean to go myſelf till after Chriſtmas." —"No indeed, my Lord!" ſaid Mr. Sandford, with ſurpriſe: "you have not paſſed your Chriſtmas here," continued he, "theſe many a year."—"No," returned his Lordſhip; "but I think I feel myſelf more attached to this houſe at preſent, than ever I did in my life."

"You imagine then, my father thought of me, when he ſaid that?" cried Matilda eagerly.

"But I may be miſtaken," replied Miſs Woodley.—"I leave you to judge. —But I am ſure Mr. Sandford imagined he thought of you, for I ſaw a ſmile over his whole face immediately."

"Did you, Miſs Woodley?"

"Yes;

"Yes; it appeared on every feature except his lips; those he closed fast together, for fear Lord Elmwood should perceive it."

Miss Woodley, with all her minute intelligence, did not however acquaint Matilda that Rushbrook followed her to the window while his Lordship was out of the room, and Sandford half asleep at the other end of it, and inquired respectfully and anxiously for her Ladyship; adding, "It is my concern for Lady Matilda which makes me thus indisposed: I suffer more than her; but I am not permitted to tell her so, nor can I hope, Miss Woodley, you will."—She replied, "You are right, Sir." Nor did she reveal this conversation, while not a sentence that passed except that, was omitted.

When

When Chriſtmas arrived Lord Elmwood had many convivial days at Elmwood Houſe, but the name of Matilda was never mentioned by one of his gueſts, and moſt probably never thought of.—During all theſe holidays ſhe was unuſually melancholy, but ſunk into the deepeſt dejection when ſhe was told the day was fixed on which her father was to depart for the ſeaſon.—On the morning of that day ſhe wept inceſſantly; and all her conſolation was, "She would go to the chamber window which was fronting the door he was to paſs through to his carriage, and for the firſt time, and moſt likely for the laſt time of her life, behold him."

This deſign was ſoon forgot in another:—"She would ruſh boldly into the apartment where he was, and at his feet

feet take leave of him for ever—She would lay hold of his hands, clasp his knees, provoke him to ſpurn her, which would be joy in compariſon to this cruel indifference."—In the bitterneſs of her grief, ſhe once called upon her mother, and reproached her memory—but the moment ſhe recollected the offence, (which was almoſt inſtantaneouſly) ſhe became all mildneſs and reſignation. "What have I ſaid?" cried ſhe; "Dear, dear ſaint, forgive me, and behold for your ſake I will bear all with patience—I will not groan, I will not even ſigh again—this taſk I ſet myſelf to atone for what I have dared to utter."

While Lady Matilda laboured under theſe variety of ſenſations, Miſs Woodley was occupied in bewailing and endeavour-

deavouring to calm her ſorrows—and Lord Elmwood, with Rushbrook, was prepared ready to ſet off. — His Lordſhip, however, loitered, and did not once ſeem in haſte to be gone.—When at laſt he got up to depart, Sandford thought he preſſed his hand, and ſhook it with more warmth than ever he had done in his life. — Encouraged by this ſuppoſition, Sandford, with the tears ſtarting in his eyes, ſaid, "my Lord, won't you condeſcend to take your leave of Miſs Woodley?" — "Certainly, Sandford." replied his Lordſhip, and ſeemed glad of an excuſe to ſit down again.

Impreſſed with the idea of the ſtate in which ſhe had left his only child, Miſs Woodley, when ſhe came before Lord Elmwood to bid him farewell,

was pale, trembling, and in tears.—Sandford, notwithstanding his Lordship's apparent kind humour, was shocked at the construction he must put upon her appearance, and cried, "What, Miss Woodley, are you not recovered of your illness yet." Lord Elmwood, however, took no notice of her looks, but after wishing her health and happiness, walked slowly out of the house; turning back frequently and speaking to Sandford or some other person who was behind him, as if part of his thoughts were left behind, and he went with reluctance.

When he had quitted the room where Miss Woodley was; Rushbrook, timid before her, as she had been before her benefactor, went up to her all humility, and said, "Miss Woodley, we ought to

to be friends, our concern, our devotion is paid to the same objects, and one common interest should teach us to be friendly."

She made no reply.—"Will you permit me to write to you when I am away?" said he; "You may wish to hear of Lord Elmwood's health, and of what changes may take place in his resolutions—Will you permit me?"——At that moment a servant came and said, "Sir, my Lord is in his carriage and waiting for you." He hasted away, and Miss Woodley was relieved from the pain of giving him a denial.

No sooner was the chariot, with all its attendants, out of sight, than Lady Matilda was conducted by Miss Woodley from her lonely retreat into that part of the house from whence her father had

juſt departed—and ſhe viſited every ſpot where he had ſo long reſided, with a pleaſing curioſity that for a while diverted her grief.—In the breakfaſt and dining rooms ſhe leaned over thoſe ſeats with a kind of filial piety, on which ſhe was told he had been accuſtomed to ſit. And in the library ſhe took up with filial delight, the pen with which he had been writing; and looked with the moſt curious attention into thoſe books that were laid upon his reading deſk.—But a hat, lying on one of the tables, gave her a ſenſation beyond any other ſhe experienced on this occaſion—in that trifling article of his dreſs, ſhe thought ſhe ſaw he himſelf, and held it in her hand with pious reverence.

In the mean time, Lord Elmwood and Ruſhbrook were proceeding on their

their road with hearts not less heavy than those which they had left at Elmwood Houſe, though neither of them could ſo well as Matilda tell the cauſe of the weight.

CHAPTER XI.

YOUNG as Lady Matilda was during the life of her mother, neither her youth, nor the recluſe ſtate in which ſhe lived, had precluded her from the notice and ſolicitations of a nobleman who had profeſſed himſelf her lover. Viſcount Margrave had an eſtate not far diſtant from the retreat Lady Elmwood had choſen, and being devoted to the ſports of the country, he ſeldom quitted it for any of thoſe joys which the town offered.—He was a young man, of a handſome perſon, and was what his neighbours ſtiled "A man of ſpirit."—He was an excellent fox-hunter, and as excellent a companion over his bottle at

the

the end of the chace—he was prodigal of his fortune in all cases where his pleasures were concerned, and as those pleasures were mostly social, his sporting companions and his mistresses (for these were also of the plural number) partook largely of his wealth.

Two months previous to Lady Elmwood's death, Miss Woodley and Lady Matilda were taking their usual walk in some fields and lanes near to their house, when chance threw Lord Margrave in their way, during a thunder storm in which they were suddenly caught; and he had the satisfaction to convey his new acquaintances to their home in his carriage, safe from the fury of the elements.—Grateful for the service his Lordship had rendered them, Miss Woodley and her charge permitted him to enquire occa-

ſionally of their healths, and would ſometimes ſee him.—The ſtory of Lady Elmwood was known to Lord Margrave, and as he beheld her daughter with a paſſion ſuch as he had been unuſed to overcome, he indulged it with the probable hope, that on the death of the mother Lord Elmwood would receive his child, and perhaps accept him as his ſon-in-law.—Wedlock was not the plan which Lord Margrave had ever propoſed to himſelf for happineſs; but the exceſs of his love on this new occaſion, ſubdued every reſolution he had taken againſt the marriage ſtate, and not daring to hope for the conſummation of his wiſhes by any other means, he ſuffered himſelf to look forward to that, as his only reſource.—No ſooner was the long-expected death of Lady Elmwood arrived, than his Lordſhip waited with impatience to hear Lady

Matilda

Matilda was ſent for and acknowledged by her father; for he meant to be the firſt to lay before Lord Elmwood his pretenſions as a ſuitor.—But thoſe pretenſions were founded on the vague hopes of a lover only; and Miſs Woodley, to whom he firſt declared them, ſaid every thing poſſible to convince him of their falaciouſneſs.—As to the object of his paſſion, ſhe was not only inſenſible, but totally inattentive to all that was ſaid to her on the ſubject.—Lady Elmwood died without ever being diſturbed with it; for her daughter did not even remember his propoſals ſo as to repeat them again, and Miſs Woodley thought it prudent to conceal from her friend, every new incident which might give her cauſe for freſh anxieties.

When

When Sandford and the ladies left this neighbourhood and came to Elmwood House, how much were their thoughts employed with other ideas, Lord Margrave did not occupy a place; and during the whole time they had been at their new abode, they had never once heard of him. He had, nevertheless, his whole mind fixed upon Lady Matilda, and placed spies in the neighbourhood to inform him of every circumstance in her situation. Having imbibed an aversion to matrimony, he heard with but little regret, that there was no prospect of her ever becoming her father's heir; while such an information gave him the hope of obtaining her, upon the illegal terms of a mistress.

Lord Elmwood's departure to town forwarded this hope, and flattering himself

felf that the humiliating ſituation in which Matilda muſt feel herſelf in the houſe of her father, might gladly induce her to take ſhelter under any other protection, he boldly advanced as ſoon as the Earl was gone, to make ſuch overtures as his wiſhes and his vanity told him, could not be rejected.

Inquiring for Miſs Woodley, he eaſily gained admittance; but at the ſight of ſo much modeſty and dignity in the perſon of Matilda, ſo much good will, and yet ſuch circumſpection in her compaſſion; and the good ſenſe and proper ſpirit which were always apparent in the manners of Sandford, his Lordſhip fell once more into the deſpondency, of becoming to Lady Matilda nothing more important to his reputation, than a huſband.

Even

Even that humble hope was, however, ſometimes denied him, while Sandford ſet forth the impropriety of troubling Lord Elmwood on ſuch a ſubject at preſent; and while the Viſcount's penetration, ſmall as it was, diſcovered in his fair one much more to diſcourage than to favour his wiſhes.—Plunged, however, too deep in his paſſion to emerge from it in haſte, he meant ſtill to viſit, and wait for a change to happier circumſtances, when he was peremptorily deſired by Mr. Sandford to deſiſt from ever coming again.

"Wherefore, Mr. Sandford?" cried his Lordſhip.

"For two reaſons, my Lord;—in the firſt place, your viſits might be diſpleaſing to Lord Elmwood;—in the next place, I know they are ſo to his daughter."

Unac-

Unaccuſtomed to be ſpoken to ſo plainly, particularly in a caſe where his heart was intereſted, his Lordſhip nevertheleſs ſubmitted with patience; but in his own mind determined how long this patience ſhould continue—no longer than it ſerved as the means to prove his obedience, and by that artifice, ſecure his better reception at ſome future period.

On his return home, cheered with the huzzas of his jovial companions, he began to conſult thoſe friends, what ſcheme was beſt to be adopted for the accompliſhment of his deſires.—Some, boldly adviſed application to the father, in defiance to the old prieſt; but that was the very laſt method his Lordſhip himſelf approved, as marriage muſt inevitably have followed Lord Elmwood's conſent; beſides, though a Peer,

Lord

Lord Musgrave was untied to rank with Peers; and even the necessary formality of an interview with one of his equals, carried along with it a terror, or at least a fatigue, to a rustic Baron.—Others, of his companions advised seduction; but happily his Lordship possessed no arts of this kind to affect a heart appendant to such a mind as Matilda's.—There were not wanting among his most favourite counsellors some, who painted the triumph and gratification of force; those assured him there was nothing to apprehend under this head; as from the behaviour of Lord Elmwood to his child, it was more than probable he would be utterly indifferent to any violence that might be offered her.—This last advice seemed inspired by the aid of wine; and no sooner had the wine freely circulated, than

beheld

this was always the scheme which appeared by far the best.

While Lord Margrave alternately cherished his hopes and his fears in the country, Rushbrook in town gave way to his fears only — every day of his life made him more acquainted with the firm, unshaken temper of Lord Elmwood, and every day whispered more forcibly to his own heart, that pity, gratitude, and friendship, strong and affectionate as these passions are, are weak and cold to that, which had gained the possession of him — he doubted, but he did not long doubt, that which he felt was love.

"And yet," said he to himself, "it is love of that kind, which arising from causes independant of the object itself, can scarcely deserve this sacred title. — Did I not love Lady Matilda before I beheld

beheld her?—for her mother's ſake I loved her — and even for her father's.—Should I have felt the ſame affection for her, had ſhe been the child of other parents?—no. Or ſhould I have felt that ſympathetic tenderneſs which now preys upon my health, had not her misfortunes excited it?—no." — Yet the love which is the reſult of gratitude and pity only, he thought had little claim to rank with his; and after the moſt deliberate and deep reflection, he concluded with this deciſive opinion—He had loved Lady Matilda, in *whatever ſtate*, in *whatever circumſtances*; and that the tenderneſs he felt towards her, and the anxiety for her happineſs before he knew her, extreme as they were, were yet cool and diſpaſſionate ſenſations, compared to that which her perſon and demeanour had incited—and though he acknowledged, that by

thoſe preceding ſentiments his heart was ſoftened, prepared, and moulded, as it were, to receive this laſt impreſſion, yet the violence of his paſſion told him genuine love, if not the baſis on which it was founded, had been the certain conſequence.—With a ſtrict ſcrutiny into his heart he fought this knowledge, but arrived at it with a regret that amounted to deſpair.

To ſhield him from deſpondency, he formed in his mind a thouſand projects, depicting the joys of his union with Lady Matilda; but her father's implacability ſtood foremoſt and confounded them all.—His Lordſhip was a man who made but few reſolutions—thoſe were the effect of deliberation; and as he was not the leaſt capricious or inconſtant in his temper, they were reſolutions which no pro-

bable event could ſhake. — Love, that produces wonders, that ſeduces and ſubdues the moſt determined and rigid ſpirits, had in two inſtances overcome the inflexibility of Lord Elmwood; he married Lady Elmwood contrary to his determination, becauſe he loved; and for the ſake of this beloved object, he had, contrary to his reſolution, taken under his immediate care young Ruſhbrook; but the magic which once enchanted away this ſpirit of immutability was no more — Lady Elmwood was no more, and the charm was broken.

As Miſs Woodley was deprived the opportunity of deſiring Ruſhbrook not to write when he aſked her the permiſſion, he paſſed one whole morning in the gratification of forming and writing a letter to her, which he thought might poſſibly be

be ſhewn to Matilda. — As he durſt not touch upon any of thoſe circumſtances in which he was the moſt intereſted, that, joined to the reſpect he wiſhed to pay the lady to whom he wrote, limited his letter to about twenty lines; yet the ſtudious manner with which theſe lines were dictated, the hope and fear they might, or might not, be ſeen and regarded by Lady Matilda, rendered the taſk an anxiety ſo pleaſing, he could have wiſhed it to have laſted for a year; and in all this magnifying of trifles was diſcoverable, the never-failing ſymptom of ardent love.

A reply to this formal addreſs was a reward he wiſhed for with impatience, but he wiſhed in vain; and in the midſt of his chagrin at the diſappointment, a ſorrow, little thought of, occurred, and

gave him a perturbation of mind he had never before experienced.—Lord Elmwood propoſed a wife to him; and in a way ſo aſſured of his acquieſcence, that if Ruſhbrook's life had depended upon his daring to diſpute his benefactor's will, he would not have had the courage to have done ſo. There was, however, in his reply, and his embarraſſment, ſomething which his Lordſhip diſcerned from a free concurrence; and looking ſteadfaſtly at him, he ſaid, in that ſtern manner which he now almoſt conſtantly adopted,

"You have no engagements, I ſuppoſe? Have made no previous promiſes?"

"None on earth, my Lord." replied Ruſhbrook candidly.

"Nor have you diſpoſed of your heart?"

"No,"

"No, my Lord." replid he; but not candidly,—nor with the appearance of candour: for though he ſpoke haſtily, it was rather like a man frightened than aſſured.—He hurried to tell the falſehood he thought himſelf obliged to tell, that the pain and ſhame might be over; but there Ruſhbrook was deceived; the lie once told was as troubleſome as in the conception, and added to his firſt confuſion, an encreaſing one.

Lord Elmwood now fixed his eyes upon him with a ſullen contempt, and riſing from his ſeat, ſaid, "Ruſhbrook, if you have been ſo inconſiderate as to give away your heart, tell me ſo at once, and tell me the object."

Ruſhbrook ſhuddered at the thought.

"I here," continued his Lordſhip, "tolerate the firſt untruth you ever told

me, as the falſe aſſertion of a lover; and give you an opportunity to recall it—but after this moment, it is a lie between man and man—a lie to your friend and father, and I will not forgive it."

Ruſhbrook ſtood ſilent, confuſed, alarmed, and bewildered in his thoughts. —His Lordſhip reſumed,

"Name the perſon, if there is any ſuch, on whom you have beſtowed your heart; and though I do not give you the ſmalleſt hope I ſhall not cenſure your folly, I will at leaſt not reproach you for having at firſt denied it."

To repeat theſe words in writing, the reader muſt condemn the young man that he could heſitate to own he loved, if he was even afraid to name the object of his paſſion; but his Lordſhip in his queſtion had made the two anſwers inſeparable,

parable, and all evaſions of the ſecond, Ruſhbrook knew would be fruitleſs, after having avowed the firſt—and how could he confeſs the latter? The abſolute orders he received from the ſteward on his firſt return from his travels, were, "Never to mention his daughter, any more than his late wife, before Lord Elmwood."—The fault of having rudely intruded into Lady Matilda's preſence, ruſhed too upon his mind; for he did not even dare to ſay, by what means he had beheld her.—But more than all, the threatening manner in which his Lordſhip uttered this rational and ſeeming conciliating ſpeech, the menaces, the ſeverity which ſat upon his countenance while he delivered thoſe moderate words, might have intimidated a man wholly independent, and leſs uſed to fear him than his nephew had been.

"You make no anſwer, Sir," ſaid his Lordſhip, after waiting a few moments for his reply.

"I have only to ſay, my Lord," returned Ruſhbrook, "that although my heart may be totally diſengaged, I may yet be diſinclined to the proſpect of marriage."

"May! May! Your heart *may* be diſengaged," repeated his Lordſhip. "Do you dare to reply to me equivocally, when I have aſked a poſitive anſwer?"

"Perhaps I am not poſitive myſelf, my Lord; but I will inquire the ſtate of my mind, and make you acquainted with it very ſoon."

As the angry demeanour of his uncle affected Ruſhbrook with fear, ſo that fear, powerfully (but with proper manlineſs)

lineſs) expreſſed, again ſoftened the diſpleaſure of Lord Elmwood; and ſeeing and pitying his nephew's ſenſibility, he now changed his auſtere voice, and ſaid mildly, but firmly,

"I give you a week to conſult with yourſelf; at the expiration of that time I ſhall talk with you again, and I command you to be then prepared to ſpeak, not only without deceit, but without heſitation." He left the room at theſe words, and left Ruſhbrook releaſed from a fate, which his apprehenſions had beheld depending that moment.

He had now a week to call his thoughts together, to weigh every circumſtance, and to determine whether implicitly to ſubmit to his Lordſhip's recommendation for a wife, or revolt from it, and ſee ſome other more ſubſervient to his will, appointed his heir.

Unde-

Undetermined how to act upon this great trial which was to decide his future deſtiny, Ruſhbrook ſuffered ſo poignant an uncertainty, that he became at length ill, and before the end of the week which his uncle had allotted him for his reply, he was confined to his bed in a high fever.—His Lordſhip was extremely affected at his indiſpoſition; he gave him every care he could beſtow, and even a great deal of his perſonal attendance.—This laſt favour had a claim upon the young man's gratitude, ſuperior to every other obligation which ſince his infancy his benefactor had conferred; and he was at times ſo moved by thoſe marks of kindneſs he received from Lord Elmwood, he would form the intention of tearing from his heart every trace Lady Matilda had left there, and as ſoon as his health permitted him, obey

to

to the utmoſt of his views every wiſh his uncle had conceived.—Yet again, Matilda's pitiable ſituation preſented itſelf to his compaſſion, and her beautious perſon to his love.—Divided between the claims of obligation to the father, and tender attachment to the daughter, his ſickneſs was increaſed by the tortures of his mind, and he once ſincerely wiſhed for that death, of which he was in danger, to free him from the dilemma into which his affections had involved him.

At the time his illneſs was at its height, and he lay complaining of the violence of his fever, Lord Elmwood, taking his hand, aſked him, "If there was any thing he could do for him?"

"Yes, yes, my Lord, a great deal," he replied eagerly

"What

"What is it, Harry?" aſked his Lordſhip kindly.

"Oh! my Lord," replied he, "that is what I muſt not tell you."

"Defer it then till you are well." ſaid his Lordſhip, fearful of being ſurpriſed, or affected by the ſtate of his health, into any promiſes which he might hereafter find the impropriety of granting.

"And when I recover, my Lord, you give me leave to reveal to you, that which I wiſh you to comply with, let it be what it will?"

His Lordſhip heſitated——but ſeeing an anxiety for the anſwer, by his raiſing himſelf upon his elbow in the bed and ſtaring wildly, Lord Elmwood at laſt ſaid, "Certainly — Yes, yes." as a child is anſwered for its quiet.

That

That Lord Elmwood could have no idea what was the real petition which Rushbrook meant to present him is certain; but it is certain he expected he had some request to make, with which it might be wrong for him to comply, and therefore he avoided hearing what it was; for great as his compassion for him in his present state, it was not of force to urge him to give a promise he did not mean to perform.—Rushbrook on his part was pleased with the assurance he might speak when he was restored to health, but no sooner was his fever abated, and his senses perfectly recovered from the slight derangement his malady had caused, than the lively remembrance of what he had hinted alarmed him, and he was even afraid to look his kind, but awful relation in the face.—Lord Elmwood's cheerfulness, however,

however, on his returning health, and his undiminiſhed attention, ſoon convinced him he had nothing to fear—But, alas! he found too, he had nothing to hope.—As his health re-eſtabliſhed his wiſhes re-eſtabliſhed alſo, and with his wiſhes his deſpair.—

Convinced now that his nephew had ſomething on his mind which he feared to reveal, his Lordſhip no longer doubted but ſome youthful attachment had armed his heart againſt any marriage he ſhould propoſe; but he had ſo much pity for his preſent weak ſtate, to delay that farther inquiry which he had threatened before his ſickneſs, to a time when he ſhould be wholly reſtored.

It was the end of May before Ruſhbrook was able to be preſent and partake in

in the uſual routine of the day—the country was now preſcribed him as the means of entire reſtoration; and as Lord Elmwood deſigned to leave London ſome time in June, he adviſed him to go to Elmwood Houſe a week or two before him;—this advice was received with delight, and a letter was ſent to Mr. Sandford to prepare for Mr. Ruſhbrook's arrival.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XII.

DURING the illneſs of Rushbrook, news had been ſent of his danger from the ſervants in town to thoſe at Elmwood Houſe, and Lady Matilda expreſſed compaſſion when ſhe was told of it—ſhe began to conceive the inſtant ſhe thought he would ſoon die, that his viſit to her had ſome merit rather than impertinence in its deſign, and that he might poſſibly be a more deſerving man than ſhe had ſuppoſed him to be. Even Sandford and Miſs Woodley began to recollect qualifications he poſſeſſed, which they never had reflected on before, and Miſs Woodley in particular reproached herſelf that ſhe had been ſo ſevere and inat-

tentive

tentive to him. — Notwithſtanding the proſpects his death pointed out to her, it was with infinite joy ſhe heard he was recovered; nor was Sandford leſs ſatisfied; for he had treated the young man too unkindly not to dread, leſt any ill ſhould befall him;—but although he was glad to hear of his reſtored health, when he was informed he was coming down to Elmwood Houſe for a few weeks in the ſtyle of its maſter, Sandford, with all his religious and humane principles, could not help thinking, "that provided the lad had been properly prepared, he had been as well out of the world as in it."

He was ſtill leſs his friend when he ſaw him arrive with his uſual florid appearance: had he come pale and ſickly, Sandford had been kind to him; but in apparent good health and ſpirits, he

could not form his mouth to tell him he was "glad to ſee him."

On his arrival, Matilda, who for five months had been at large, ſecluded herſelf as ſhe would have done upon the arrival of Lord Elmwood; but with far different ſenſations. — Notwithſtanding her reſtriction on the latter occaſion, the reſidence of her father in that houſe had been a ſource of pleaſure, rather than of ſorrow to her; but from the abode of Ruſhbrook ſhe derived puniſhment alone.

When, from inquiries made to his own ſervant, who inquired again, Ruſhbrook found that on his approach Matilda had retired to her own confined apartments, the thought was torture to him; it was the hope of ſeeing and converſing with her, of being admitted at all

all times to her ſociety as the miſtreſs of the houſe, that had raiſed his ſpirits, and effected his perfect cure, beyond any other cauſe; and he was hurt to the greateſt degree at this reſpect, or rather contempt, ſhown to him by her retreat.

It was, nevertheleſs, a ſubject too delicate to touch upon in any one ſenſe—an invitation for her company on his part, might carry the appearance of ſuperior authority, and an affected condeſcenſion, which he juſtly conſidered as the worſt of all inſults.—And yet, how could he ſupport the idea that his viſit had placed the daughter of his benefactor as a dependant ſtranger in that houſe, where in reality he was the dependant, and ſhe the lawful heir.—For two or three days he ſuffered the torments of theſe reflections, hoping to come to an explanation

of all, he felt by a fortunate meeting with Miss Woodley; but when that meeting occurred, although he observed she talked to him with less reserve than she had formerly done, and even gave some proofs of the goodness of her disposition, yet she scrupulously avoided naming Lady Matilda; and when he diffidently enquired of her Ladyship's health, a cold restraint spread over Miss Woodley's face, and she left him instantly.—To Sandford it was still more difficult to apply; for though they were frequently together, they were never sociable; and as Sandford seldom disguised his feelings, to Rushbrook he was always extremley severe, and sometimes unmannerly.

In this perplexed situation, the country air was rather of detriment than service to the invalid; and had he not, like

a true lover, held fast to hope, while he could perceive nothing but deſpair; he had returned to town, rather than by his ſtay placed in a ſubordinate ſtate the object of his adoration.—But ſtill perſiſting in his hopes, he one morning met Miſs Woodley in the garden, and engaging her a longer time than uſual in converſation, at laſt obtained her promiſe "She would that day dine with him and Mr. Sandford."—But no ſooner had ſhe parted from him than ſhe repented of her conſent, and upon communicating it to Matilda, that young lady, for the firſt time in her life, darted upon her kind companion, a look of the moſt cutting reproach and haughty reſentment.—Miſs Woodley's own ſentiments had upbraided her before; but ſhe was not prepared to receive ſo pointed a mark of diſapprobation from her young friend,

till now, duteous and humble to her as to a mother, and not leſs affectionate. Her heart was too ſuſceptible to bear this diſreſpectful and contumelious frown from the object of her long-devoted care and concern; the tears inſtantly covered her face, and ſhe laid her hands upon her heart, as if ſhe thought it would break.—Matilda was moved, but ſhe poſſeſſed too much of the manly reſentment of her father, to diſcover what ſhe felt for the firſt few minutes.—Miſs Woodley, who had given ſo many tears to her ſorrows, but never till now, one to her anger, had a ſtill deeper ſenſe of this indifference, than of the anger itſelf, and to conceal what ſhe ſuffered, left the room.—Matilda, who had been till this time working at her needle, ſeemingly compoſed, now let her work drop from her hand, and ſat for a little while in a deep reverie.—

At length ſhe roſe up, and followed Miſs Woodley to the other apartment.—She entered grave, majeſtical, and apparently ſerene, while her poor heart fluttered with a thouſand diſtreſſing ſenſations.—She approached Miſs Woodley (who was ſtill in tears) with a ſullen ſilence; and awed by her manners the faithful friend of her deceaſed mother exclaimed, "Dear Lady Matilda, think no more on what I have done — do not reſent it any longer, and on my knees I'll beg your pardon." Miſs Woodley roſe as ſhe uttered theſe laſt words; but Matilda laid faſt hold of her to prevent the poſture ſhe offered to take, and inſtantly aſſumed it herſelf. "Oh, let this be my atonement!" ſhe cried with the moſt earneſt ſupplication.

They interchanged forgiveneſs; and as this reconciliation was ſincere, they

each without reſerve gave their opinion upon the ſubject that had cauſed the miſunderſtanding; and it was agreed that an apology ſhould be ſent to Mr. Ruſhbrook, "That Miſs Woodley had been ſuddenly indiſpoſed." nor could this be ſaid to differ from the truth, for ſince what had paſſed ſhe was unfit to pay a viſit.

Ruſhbrook, who had been all the morning elated with the advance he ſuppoſed he had made in that lady's favour, was highly diſappointed, vext, and angry when this apology was delivered to him; nor did he, nor perhaps could he, conceal what he felt, although his ſevere obſerver, Mr. Sandford, was preſent.

"I am a very unfortunate man," ſaid he, as ſoon as the ſervant was gone who brought the meſſage.

Sandford

Sandford caſt his eyes upon him with a look of ſurpriſe and contempt.

"A very unfortunate man indeed, Mr. Sandford," repeated he, "although you treat my complaint contemptuouſly."

Sandford made no reply, and ſeemed above making one.

They ſat down to dinner;—Ruſhbrook eat ſcarce any thing, but drank frequently; Sandford took no notice of either, but had a book (which was his cuſtom when he dined with perſons whoſe converſation was not intereſting to him) laid by the ſide of his plate, which he occaſionally looked into, as the diſhes were removing, or other opportunities ſerved.

Ruſhbrook, juſt now more hopeleſs than ever of forming an acquaintance

with

with Lady Matilda, began to give way to the ſymptoms of deſpair; and they made their firſt attack by urging him to treat on the ſame level of familiarity that he himſelf was treated, Mr. Sandford, to whom he had till now ever behaved with the moſt profound tokens of reſpect.

"Come," ſaid he to him as ſoon as the dinner was removed, "Lay aſide your book and be good company."

Sandford lifted up his eyes upon him—ſtared in his face—and caſt them on the book again.

"I ſay," continued Ruſhbrook, "I want a companion; and as Miſs Woodley has diſappointed me, I muſt have your company."

Sandford now laid down his book upon the table, but ſtill holding his fingers in the pages he was reading, ſaid, "And why

why are you diſappointed of Miſs Woodley's company?—When people expect what they have no right to hope for, they have yet the aſſurance to complain they are diſappointed."

"I had a right to expect ſhe would come," anſwered Ruſhbrook, "for ſhe promiſed ſhe would.

"But what right had you to aſk her?"

"The right every one has, to make his time paſs as agreeably as he can."

"But not at the expence of another."

"I believe, Mr. Sandford, it would be a heavy expence to you, to ſee me happy; I believe it would coſt you even your own happineſs."

"That is a price I have not now to give." replied Sandford, and he began reading again.

"What, you have already paid it away? No wonder that at your time of life

life it should be gone.—But what do you think of my having already squandered mine?"

"I don't think about you," returned Sandford, without taking his eyes from the book.

"Can you look me in the face and say that, Mr. Sandford?—No, you cannot—for you know you *do* think of me, and you know you hate me."—Here he drank two glasses of wine one after another;—"And I can tell you why you hate me," continued he: "It is from a cause for which I often hate myself."

Sandford read on.

"It is on Lady Matilda's account you hate me, and use me thus."

Sandford put down his book hastily, and put both his hands by his side.

"Yes,"

"Yes," returned Rushbrook, "you think I am wronging her."

"I think you grossly insult her," exclaimed Sandford, "by this rude mention of her name; and I command you at your peril to desist."

"At my peril! Mr. Sandford? Do you assume the authority of Lord Elmwood?"

"I do on this occasion; and if you dare to give your tongue a freedom"——Rushbrook interrupted him—"Why then I boldly say, (and as her friend you ought rather to applaud than relent it) I boldly say, my heart suffers so much for her situation, I am regardless of my own.—I love her father—I loved her mother more—but she herself beyond either."

"Hold your licentious tongue," cried Sandford, "or quit the room."

"Licen-

"Licentious? Oh! the pure thoughts that dwell in her innocent mind, are not less sensual than mine towards her.—Do you upbraid me with my respect, my pity for her? They are the sensations which impel me to speak thus undisguised, even to you, my open—no, even worse—my secret enemy!"

"Insult *me* as you please, Mr. Rushbrook,—but beware how you mention Lord Elmwood's daughter."

"Can it be to her dishonour that I pity her? that I would quit the house this moment never to return, so she supplied the place I withhold from her."

"Go, then." cried Sandford.

"It would be of no use to her, or I would.—But come, Mr. Sandford, I will dare do as much as you.—Only second me, and I will entreat Lord Elmwood

wood to be reconciled—to ſee and own her."

"Your vanity would be equal to your raſhneſs.—You entreat?—She muſt greatly eſteem thoſe parental favours which your entreaties gained her!—Do you forget, young man, how ſhort a time it is, ſince you were entreated for?"

"I prove I do not, while this anxiety for Lady Matilda, ariſes, from what I feel on that account."

"Remove your anxiety, then, from her to yourſelf; for were I to let Lord Elmwood know what has paſſed now"—

"It is for your own ſake, not for mine, if you don't."

"You ſhall not dare me to it, Mr. Ruſhbrook,"—And he roſe from his ſeat: "You ſhall not dare me to do you an injury.—But to avoid the temptation, I will never again come into your com-

pany,

pany, unleſs my friend Lord Elmwood is preſent, to protect me and his child from your inſults."

Rushbrook roſe in yet more warmth than Sandford. "Have you the injuſtice to ſay I have inſulted Lady Matilda?"

"To ſpeak of her at all, is in you an inſult.—But you have done more—You have dared to viſit her—to force into her preſence and ſhock her with your offers of ſervices which ſhe ſcorns; and of your compaſſion which ſhe is far above."

"Did ſhe complain to you?"

"She, or her friend did."

"I rather ſuppoſe, Mr. Sandford, you have bribed ſome of the ſervants to reveal this."

"The ſuſpicion becomes Lord Elmwood's heir."

"It

book. "It becomes the man, who lives in a houſe with you."

"I thank you, Mr. Ruſhbrook, for what has paſſed this day—it has taken a weight off my mind.—I thought my diſinclination to you, might perhaps ariſe from prejudice—this converſation has relieved me from thoſe fears, and I thank you."—Saying this he calmly walked out of the room, and left Ruſhbrook to reflect on what he had been doing.

Heated with the wine he had drank, (and which Sandford engaged on his book had not obſerved) no ſooner was he alone, than he became at once cool and repentant.—"What had he done?" was the firſt queſtion to himſelf—"He had offended Sandford"—The man whom reaſon as well as prudence had

never taught him to treat with reſpect and even reverence.—He had groſſly offended the firm friend of Lady Matilda, and even by the unreſerved, the wanton uſe of her name.—All the retorts he had uttered came now to his memory; with a total forgetfulneſs of all Sandford had ſaid to provoke them.

He once thought to follow him and Beg his pardon; but the contempt with which he had been treated, more than all the anger, withheld him.

As he ſat forming plans how to retrieve the opinion, ill as it was, which Sandford formerly entertained of him, he received a letter from Lord Elmwood, kindly enquiring after his health, and ſaying he ſhould be down early in the following week.—Never were the friendly expreſſions of his Lordſhip half

ſo

so welcome to him; for they served to sooth his imagination, racked with Sandford's wrath and his own displeasure.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN Sandford acted deliberately he always acted up to his duty; it was his duty to forgive Rushbrook and he did so — but he had declared he would never "be again in his company unless Lord Elmwood was present;"—and with all his forgiveness, he found an unforgiving gratification, in the duty, of being obliged to keep his word.

The next day Rushbrook dined alone, while Sandford gave his company to the ladies. — Rushbrook was too proud to seek to Sandford with abject concessions, but he endeavoured to meet him

as by accident, and try what, in such a case, a submissive apology might effect. —For a day or two, all the schemes he formed on that head proved fruitless; he could never procure even a sight of him.—But on the evening of the third day, taking a lonely walk, he turned the corner of a grove, and saw in the very path he was going, Sandford accompanied by Miss Woodley; and, what agitated him much more, Lady Matilda was with them.—He knew not whether to proceed, or to quit the path and palpably shun them — To one who seemed to put an unkind construction upon all he said and did, he knew to do either, would be to do wrong.—In spite of the propensity he felt to pass so near to Lady Matilda, could he have known what conduct would have been deemed the most respectful, whatever painful

denial it had coſt him, that, he would have adopted.—But undetermined whether to go forward, or to croſs to another path, he ſtill walked on till he came too nigh to recede; he then, with a diffidence not affected, but felt in the moſt powerful degree, pulled of his hat, and without bowing, ſtood ſilently while the company paſſed.—Sandford walked on ſome paces before, and took no farther notice as he went by him, than juſt touching the fore part of his hat with his finger.—Miſs Woodley curtſied as ſhe followed.—But Lady Matilda made a full ſtop, and ſaid, in the gentleſt accents, "I hope, Mr. Ruſhbrook, you are perfectly recovered."

It was the ſweeteſt muſic he ever liſtened to; and he returned with the moſt reſpectful bow, "I am better a great deal, Ma'am." and purſued his way as

if

if he did not dare to utter another ſyllable.

Sandford ſeldom found fault with Lady Matilda; not becauſe he loved her, but becauſe ſhe ſeldom did wrong—upon this occaſion, however, he was half inclined to reprimand her; but yet he did not know what to ſay—the ſubſequent humility of Ruſhbrook had taken from the indiſcretion of her ſpeaking to him, and the event could by no means juſtify his cenſure.—On hearing her begin to ſpeak Sandford had ſtopped; and as Ruſhbrook after replying, walked away, Sandford called to her croſſly, "Come, come along." But at the ſame time he put out his elbow for her to take hold of his arm.

She haſtened her ſteps, and did ſo—then turning to Miſs Woodley, ſhe ſaid, "I expected you would have ſpoken

to Mr. Rushbrook; it might have prevented me."

Miss Woodley replied, "I was at a loss what to do;—when we met formerly, he always spoke first."

"And ought now," cried Sandford angrily—and then added, with a sarcastic smile, "It is certainly the duty of the superior, to be the first who speaks."

"He did not look as if he thought himself our superior," replied Matilda.

"No," returned Sandford, "some people can put on what looks they please."

"Then while he looks so pale," replied Matilda, "and so dejected, I can never forbear speaking to him when we meet, whatever he may think of it."

"And were he and I to meet a hundred, nay a thousand times," replied Sandford,

Sandford, "I don't think I shall ever speak to him again."

"Bless me! what for, Mr. Sandford?" cried Matilda — for Sandford, who was not a man that repeated little incidents, had never mentioned the circumstance of their quarrel.

"I have taken such a resolution," answered he, "yet I bear him no enmity."

As this short reply indicated he meant to say no more, no more was asked; and the subject dropped.

In the mean time, Rushbrook, happier than he had been for months, intoxicated with joy at that voluntary mark of civility he had received from Lady Matilda, felt his heart so joyous, so free from every particle of malice, that he resolved in the humblest manner,

ner, to make atonement for the breach of decorum he had lately been guilty of to Mr. Sandford.

Too happy at this time to ſuffer a mortification from any treatment he might receive, he ſent his ſervant to him into his ſtudy, as ſoon as he was returned home, to beg to know "If he might be permitted to wait upon him, with a meſſage he had to deliver from Lord Elmwood."

The ſervant returned — "Mr. Sandford deſired he would ſend the meſſage by him, or the houſe ſteward." This was highly affronting; but Ruſhbrook was not in a humour to be offended, and he ſent again, begging he would admit him; — but the anſwer was, "He was buſy."

Thus defeated in his hopes of reconciliation, his new tranſports felt an allay, and

and the few days that remained before Lord Elmwood came, he paſſed in ſolitary muſing, and ineffectual walks and looks towards that path where he had met Matilda — ſhe came that way no more — nor indeed ſcarce quitted her apartment, in the practice of that confinement ſhe had to experience on the arrival of her father.

All her former agitations now returned.—On the day he arrived ſhe wept — all the night ſhe did not ſleep — and the name of Ruſhbrook again became hateful to her. — His Lordſhip came in extreme good health and ſpirits, but appeared concerned to find Ruſhbrook leſs well than when he went from town. — Sandford was now under the neceſſity of being in Ruſhbrook's company, yet he took care never to ſpeak to him but when

he

he was obliged; or to look at him but when he could not help it.—Lord Elmwood observed this conduct, yet he neither wondered, or was offended at it—he had always perceived what little esteem Sandford showed his nephew from his first return; but he forgave in Sandford's humour a thousand faults he would forgive in no other; nor did he deem this one of his greatest faults, knowing the claim to his partiality from another object.

Miss Woodley waited on Lord Elmwood as formerly; dined with him, and as heretofore related to the attentive Matilda all that passed.

About this time Lord Margrave, deprived by the season of all the sports of the field, felt his love for Matilda (which had been extreme while divided with the love

love of hunting) too violent to be subdued; and he resolved, though reluctantly, to apply to her father for his consent to their union;—but writing to Sandford this resolution, he was once more repulsed, and charged as a man of honour, to forbear to disturb the tranquility of the family by any application of the kind.—To this Sandford received no answer; for his Lordship, highly incensed at his mistress's repugnance to him, determined more firmly than ever, to consult his own happiness alone; and as that depended merely upon his obtaining her, he cared not by what method it was effected.

About a fortnight after Lord Elmwood came into the country, as he was riding one morning, his horse fell with him, and crushed his leg in so unfortunate a manner,

manner, as to be pronounced of dangerous conſequence.—He was brought home in a poſt chaiſe, and Matilda heard of the accident with more grief than would, on ſuch an occaſion, appertain to the moſt fondled child.

In conſequence of the pain he ſuffered his fever was one night very high; and Sandford, who ſeldom quitted his apartment, went frequently to his bed ſide; every time with the ſecret hope he ſhould hear him aſk to ſee his daughter—he was every time diſappointed—yet he ſaw him ſhake with a cordial friendſhip the hand of Ruſhbrook, as if he delighted in ſeeing thoſe he loved.

The danger in which Lord Elmwood was ſuppoſed to be, was but of ſhort duration, and his ſudden recovery ſucceeded.—Matida who had wept, moaned, and watched

watched during the criſis of his illneſs, when ſhe heard he was amending, exclaimed (with a kind of ſurpriſe at the novelty of the ſenſation) "And this is joy that I feel!—Oh! I never till now knew, what thoſe perſons felt that experienced joy."

Nor did ſhe repine, like Mr. Sandford and Miſs Woodley, at her father's inattention to her during his malady, for ſhe did not hope like them—ſhe did not hope he would behold her, even in dying.

But notwithſtanding his Lordſhip's ſeeming indifference while his indiſpoſition continued, no ſooner was he recovered ſo as to receive the congratulations of his friends, than there was no one perſon he evidently ſhowed ſo much ſatisfaction at ſeeing, as Miſs Woodley.—She waited upon him timorouſly, and with more than

ordinary

ordinary distaste at his late conduct, when he put out his hand with the utmost warmth to receive her, drew her to him, saluted her, (an honour he had never in his life conferred before) and all with signs of the sincerest friendship and affection. — Sandford was present, and ever associating the idea of Matilda with Miss Woodley, felt his heart bound with a triumph it had not enjoyed for many a day.

Matilda listened with delight to the recital Miss Woodley gave on her return, and many times while it lasted exclaimed "She was happy." But poor Matilda's sudden transports of joy, which she termed happiness, were not made for long continuance; and if she ever found cause for gladness, she far oftener had motives for grief.

As

As Mr. Sandford was ſitting with her and Miſs Woodley one evening about a week after, a perſon rung at the bell and enquired for him; on being told of it by the ſervant, he went to the door of the apartment and cried "Oh! is it you? Come in." — An elderly man entered, who had been for many years the head gardener at Elmwood Houſe; a man of honeſty and ſobriety, and with a large indigent family of aged parents, children, and other relatives, who ſubſiſted wholly on the income ariſing from his place — The ladies, as well as Sandford, knew him well, and they all, almoſt at once, aſked "What was the matter?" for his looks told them ſomething diſtreſsful had befallen him.

"Oh, Sir!" ſaid he to Sandford, "I come to entreat your intereſt."

A

"In what, Edwards?" ſaid Sandford with a mild voice; for when his aſſiſtance was ſupplicated in diſtreſs, his rough tones always took a plaintive key.

"My Lord has diſcharged me from his ſervice,"—(returned Edwards trembling, and the tears ſtarting in his eyes) "I am undone, Mr. Sandford, unleſs you plead for me."

"I will," ſaid Sandford, "I will."

"And yet I am almoſt afraid of your ſucceſs," replied the man, "for my Lord has ordered me out of his houſe this moment; and though I knelt down to him to be heard, he had no pity."

Matilda ſighed from the bottom of her heart, and yet ſhe envied this poor man who had been kneeling to her father.

"What was your offence?" cried Sandford.

The

The man hesitated; then looking at Matilda, said, "I'll tell you, Sir, some other time."

"Did you name me, before Lord Elmwood?" cried she eagerly, and terrified.

"No, Madam," replied he, "but I unthinkingly spoke of my poor Lady that is dead and gone."

Matilda burst into tears.

"How came you to do so mad a thing?" cried Sandford, with the encouragement his looks had once given him, now fled from his face.

"It was unthinkingly," repeated Edwards; "I was showing my Lord some plans for the new walks, and told him, among other things, that her Ladyship had many years ago approved of them." —'Who?' cried he. —Still I did not call to mind, but repeated 'Lady Elm-

wood, Sir, while you were abroad.—As ſoon as theſe words were delivered, I ſaw my doom in his looks, and he commanded me to quit his houſe and ſervice that inſtant."

"I am afraid," ſaid Sandford, ſitting down, "I can do nothing for you."

"Yes, Sir, you know you have more power over my Lord than any body—and perhaps you may be able to ſave me and all mine from miſery."

"I would if I could," replied Sandford quickly.

"You can but try, Sir."

Matilda was all this while drowned in tears; nor Miſs Woodley much leſs affected—Lady Elmwood was before their eyes—Matilda beheld her in her dying moments; Miſs Woodley ſaw her, as the gay ward of Dorriforth.

"Aſk

—"Ask Mr. Ruthbrook," ſaid Sandford, "prevail on him to ſpeak; he has more power than I have."

"He has not enough, then," replied Edwards, "for he was in the room with my Lord when what I have told you happened."

"And did he ſay nothing?" aſked Sandford.

"Yes, Sir; he offered to ſpeak in my behalf, but my Lord interrupted him, and ordered him out of the room — he inſtantly went.

Sandford now obſerving the effect which this narration had on the two ladies, led the man to his own apartments, and there aſſured him he durſt not undertake his cauſe; but that if time or chance ſhould happily make an alteration in his Lordſhip's diſpoſition, he would

be the firſt to try to replace him. — Edwards was obliged to ſubmit; and before the next day at noon, his pleaſant houſe by the ſide of the park, his garden, and his orchard, which he had occupied above twenty years, were cleared of their old inhabitant, and all his wretched family.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIV.

THIS melancholy incident perhaps affected Matilda and all the friends of the deceaſed Lady Elmwood, beyond any other that had occurred ſince her death.—A few days after this circumſtance, Miſs Woodley, in order to divert the diſconſolate mind of Lady Matilda, (and perhaps bring her ſome little anecdotes, to conſole her for that which had given her ſo much pain) waited upon Lord Elmwood in his library, and borrowed ſome books out of it.—He was now perfectly well from his fall, and received her with the ſame politeneſs as uſual, but, of courſe, not with that particular warmth he had re-

received her just after his illneſs.—Rushbrook was in the library at the ſame time; he ſhewed to her ſeveral beautiful prints which his Lordſhip had juſt received from London, and appeared anxious to entertain, and give tokens of his eſteem and reſpect for her.—But what gave her pleaſure beyond any other attention was, that after ſhe had taken (by the aid of Rushbrook) about a dozen volumes from different ſhelves, and had laid them together, ſaying ſhe would ſend her ſervant to fetch them, Lord Elmwood went eagerly to the place where they were, and taking up each book, examined attentively what it was.—One author he complained was too light, another too depreſſing, and put them on the ſhelves again; another was erroneous and he changed it for a better; and thus he warned her againſt ſome,

and

and ſelected other authors; as the moſt cautious preceptor culls for his pupil, or a fond father for his darling child.—She thanked him for his attention to her, but her heart thanked him for his attention to his daughter.—For as ſhe herſelf had never received ſuch a proof of his care ſince all their long acquaintance, ſhe reaſonably ſuppoſed Matilda's reading, and not hers, was the object of his ſolicitude.

Having in theſe books ſtore of comfort for poor Matilda, ſhe eagerly returned with them; and in reciting every particular circumſtance, made her conſider the volumes almoſt like preſents from her father.

The month of September was now arrived, and Lord Elmwood, accompanied by Ruſhbrook, went to a ſmall

ſhooting

ſhooting ſeat, about twenty miles diſtant from Elmwood Caſtle, for a week's particular ſport. — Matilda was once more at large; and one beautiful forenoon, about eleven o'clock, ſeeing Miſs Woodley walking on the lawn before the houſe, ſhe haſtily took her hat to join her; and not waiting to put it on, went nimbly down the great ſtaircaſe with it hanging on her arm.—When ſhe had deſcended a few ſtairs, ſhe heard a footſtep walking ſlowly up; and, (from what emotion ſhe could not tell,) ſhe ſtopt ſhort, half reſolved to return back. —She heſitated a ſingle inſtant which to do — then went a few ſteps farther till ſhe came to the ſecond landing place; when, by the ſudden winding of the ſtaircaſe,—Lord Elmwood was immediately before her!

She

She had felt ſomething like affright before ſhe ſaw him—but her reaſon told her ſhe had nothing to fear, as he was far away.—But now the appearance of a ſtranger whom ſhe had never before ſeen; an air of authority in his looks as well as in the ſound of his ſteps; a reſemblance to the portrait ſhe had ſeen of him; a ſtart of aſtoniſhment which he gave on beholding her; but above all—her *fears* confirmed her it was him.—She gave a ſcream of terror—put out her trembling hands to catch the baluſtrades on the ſtairs for ſupport—miſſed them—and fell motionleſs into her father's arms.

He caught her, as by that impulſe he would have caught any other perſon falling for want of aid.—Yet when he found her in his arms, he ſtill held her there—

there — gazed on her attentively — and once preſſed her to his boſom.

At length, trying to eſcape the ſnare into which he had been led, he was going to leave her on the ſpot where ſhe fell, when her eyes opened and ſhe uttered, "Save me." — Her voice unmanned him. — His long-reſtrained tears now burſt forth — and ſeeing her relapſing into the ſwoon again, he cried out eagerly to recall her. — Her name did not however come to his recollection nor any name but this — "Miſs Milner — Dear Miſs Milner."

That ſound did not awake her; and now again he wiſhed to leave her in this ſenſeleſs ſtate, that not remembering what had paſſed, ſhe might eſcape the puniſhment.

But

But at this inſtant Giffard, with another ſervant, paſſed by the foot of the ſtairs; on which, Lord Elmwood called to them — and into Giffard's hands delivered his apparently dead child; without one command reſpecting her, or one word of any kind; while his face was agitated with ſhame, with pity, with anger, with paternal tenderneſs.

As Giffard ſtood trembling, while he relieved his Lord from this hapleſs burthen; his Lordſhip had to unlooſe her hand from the ſide of his coat, which ſhe had caught faſt hold of as ſhe fell, and graſped ſo cloſely, it was with difficulty releaſed. — On taking the hand away his Lordſhip trembled — faltered — then bade Giffard do it.

"Who, I, my Lord, I ſeparate you?" cried he. — But recollecting himſelf,

"My

"My Lord, I will obey your commands whatever they are." And ſeizing her hand, pulled it with violence—it fell—and her father went away.

Matilda was carried to her own apartments, laid upon the bed, and Miſs Woodley called to attend her, after liſtening to the recital of what had paſſed.

When Lady Elmwood's old and affectionate friend entered the room, and ſaw her youthful charge lying pale and ſpeechleſs, yet no father by to comfort or ſooth her, ſhe lifted up her hands to heaven exclaiming, with a flood of tears, "And is this the end of thee, my poor child?—Is this the end of all our hopes?—of thy own fearful hopes—and

and of thy mother's ſupplications? — Oh! Lord Elmwood! Lord Elmwood!"

—"At that name Matilda ſtarted, and cried, "Where is he? — Is it a dream, or have I ſeen him?"

"It is all a dream, my dear." ſaid Miſs Woodley.

"And yet I thought he held me in his arms," ſhe replied — "I thought I felt his hands preſs mine — Let me ſleep and dream it again."

Now thinking it beſt to undeceive her, "It is no dream, my dear." returned Miſs Woodley.

"Is it not?" cried ſhe, ſtarting up and leaning on her elbow — "Then I ſuppoſe I muſt go away — go for ever away."——

Sandford now entered.—Having been told the news he came to condole—But

at

at the ſight of him Matilda was terrified, and cried, "Do not reproach me, do not upbraid me—I know I have done wrong—I know I had but one command from my father, and that I have diſobeyed."

Sandford could not reproach her, for he could not ſpeak;—he therefore only walked to the window and concealed his tears.

That whole day and night was paſſed in ſympathetic grief, in alarm at every ſound, leſt it ſhould be a meſſenger to pronounce Matilda's deſtiny.

Lord Elmwood did not ſtay upon this viſit above three hours at Elmwood Houſe; he then ſet off again for the ſeat he had left; where Ruſhbrook ſtill remained, and from whence his Lordſhip had

had merely come by accident, to look over ſome writings he wanted diſpatched to town.

During his ſhort continuance here, Sandford cautiouſly avoided his preſence; for he thought, in a caſe like this, what nature would not of herſelf do, no art, no arguments of his could effect—and to nature and to providence he left the whole.—What theſe two powerful principles brought about, the reader muſt judge, on peruſing the following letter, received early the next morning by Miſs Woodley.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

ERRATA.

Page 75 line 7 after *Lord Elmwood* insert *here*.
—— 153 — 14 for *depending* read *impending*.
—— 167 — 3 for *majestical* read *majestic*.
—— 168 — 2 for *that* read *which*.
—— 174 — 5 for *they* read *these*.